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# GCI

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# Learn Chinese, Double Your World

**T**HIS IS THE SLOGAN from the Headquarters of the Confucius Institute (孔子学院总部/汉办), one that matches my own belief: when people set out to learn a foreign language, the hard labour will pay off in that their newly acquired language will lead them to a new world, both in vision and in reality. Learning the Chinese language will provide insights on China and Chinese people that will broaden the individual’s horizon, or: double his/her world.

Working at the Groningen Confucius Institute (GCI), I have had the chance to meet various people from a variety of backgrounds who want to study Chinese. Motivation to learn Chinese ranges from general interest and curiosity to seeking professional and academic advancement. Increasingly, university students are recognising the importance and significance of Chinese for their future career and enrolment numbers in Chinese programmes are experiencing a steady increase. Additionally, quite a few other students choose to learn Chinese just out of an interest in and curiosity for Chinese culture and its character-based language. And to my surprise, the reason that Professor Joël Bellassen, a renowned sinologist in France, chose to study Chinese forty years ago was simply because he wanted to do something different.

From a Western learner, I once heard a description of the Chinese language: at first glance at the language, it resembles a jigsaw puzzle and you have no idea where to start. But if you work on some of the pieces and find more and more connections and principles, you will be encouraged to make the jigsaw image bigger and bigger. This reminded me of a story about a puzzle made by a scientist who wanted to keep his nine-year-old son busy. The scientist grabbed and tore a page from a booklet with the world map, cut it into small pieces, and let his son reconstruct the map. To his surprise, a couple of hours later, the map was perfectly restored and all the pieces were in place! “How did you DO that?” the scientist asked his son. “You’ve never seen a world map before, have you?” Well, dad,” the boy answered, “I don’t know the world, but when you tore the page from the magazine, I saw on the other side a picture of a man. So I flipped all the pieces and started to fix the person. And when I fixed the man, I turned it over and saw the world had been fixed as well.”

Obviously there are certain implications in the philosophical aspect, but there is something in this story for language study, too: first, braveness and boldness are required to start a new language, irrespective of how difficult it is perceived to be by others; secondly, use your own knowledge and identify your own way to learn; and last but not least, explore the world behind the language and discover the cultural foundation to gain a better understanding of the language.

**Liu Jingyi**  
Editor-in-Chief



# Silk: Pure Chinese Lifestyle

Liu Mingjiang (刘明江)  
Translated by Gui Tao (桂涛)

If any fabric is associated with China, then it has got to be silk. First developed in ancient China, silks were not just reserved for emperors as gifts, but they helped the Chinese to boost their imagination in religion and artistic expression. Even to this very day, silk is perceived as a perfect reflection of Chinese wisdom and typical lifestyle, as the most ideal representation of nature's harmony and beauty.

The manufacture of silk has always required that perfect combination of plant, animal and human labour, without which silk simply cannot be produced. A passage in *Rites of Zhou* (《周礼》 Zhōulǐ), ancient Chinese ritual texts listed among the classics of Confucianism (儒学 Rúxué), sums up the importance and significance of this combination:

Only the combination of good timing, proper environment, quality materials and the fine craftsmanship will yield the desirable outcome. Without the first two elements, even the quality materials and the fine craftsmanship will just lead to the undesirable outcome.

Tiān yǒu shí, dì yǒu qì,  
天 有 时, 地 有 气,  
Cái yǒu měi, gōng yǒu qiǎo.  
材 有 美, 工 有 巧。  
Hé cǐ sì zhě, rán hòu kě yǐ wéi liáng.  
合 此 四 者, 然 后 可 以 为 良。  
Cái měi gōng qiǎo, rán ér bù liáng,  
材 美 工 巧, 然 而 不 良,  
Zé bù shí, bù dé dì qì yě.  
则 不 时, 不 得 地 气 也。

Not only do these words express China's oldest and most insightful and valuable theory of creation. They can even serve as a guiding philosophy for today's agricultural production, industrial manufacture and



design. This creation theory can perhaps be best illustrated with China's ancient silkworm breeding and the growing of mulberry.

To date, of all the insects, only silkworms and bees have been domesticated by human beings. Sericulture, the rearing of silkworms, is not only purely manual and self-sufficient, but totally natural and pollution-free. It goes through the unique and virtuous cycle of mulberry growing, mulberry leaf harvest, silkworm breeding, cocoon reeling-off and silk weaving. The whole production process is anything but destructive: it does not slash, smash, beat or cut; nor does it use tools or behaviour reminiscent of these actions. Whilst the Industrial Revolution in the West first saw the development of heavy-duty, loud machines to weave materials,

sericulture provides a counterexample, one that enforces lasting peace and harmony, marking coexistence between humans and nature.

Over the course of Chinese history, silk has had varying uses and applications which have evolved over time. In the country's turbulent Wei and Jin Dynasties (魏晋时期 220-420), for instance, frustrated Chinese officials indulged themselves in drinking, playing music or alchemy. Disappointed at the earthly world, they searched for spiritual uplifting and found it in silk. Thanks to its tenderness and smoothness, silk satisfied the officials' psychological demands to become supernatural beings, because the light and floating silk clothes gave them the feeling of light-heartedness and freedom.

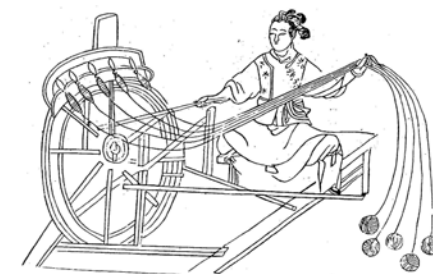


Back in China's Tang Dynasty (唐朝 618-907), silk was used in women's fashion. At a time when plumpness was aesthetically preferred, revealing silk dresses were seen to accentuate women's curvy breasts and shoulders. The gentle silk and women's beauty mutually reinforced and complimented each other. But women were not just the wearers of silks; they were also involved in the manufacturing process. Fan Chengda (范成大), one of the best-known poets of the Song Dynasty (宋代 960-1279), reveals in his *Four Seasons Pastoral Poem* (《四时田园杂兴》 Sìshí Tiányuán Zāxīng) that women and even children participate in the silk process: tending the land by day and twisting the linen threads by night, all the villagers supporting their families with their own work and skills.



Zhòu chū yún tián yè jì má,  
昼 出 耘 田 夜 绩 麻,  
Cūn zhuāng ér nǚ gè dāng jiā.  
村 庄 儿 女 各 当 家。

In short: silk manufacture was a family affair and the development of sericulture gave birth to China's traditional mode of family life: the men plough and the women weave. The lifestyle has since become a divine right of common Chinese people.



Irrespective of the dynasty, the foundation of the nation and its political power will not collapse, if this right itself is neither challenged nor deprived.

This lifestyle, meeting the basic living conditions of human beings, minimises conflicts between man and nature. For a common Chinese male person, ultimate happiness is achieved by working in sunny fields alongside his wife and children, looking forward to the coming harvest, or watching his wife weaving at night under the light of the lamp.

Silk is a perfect combination of plants,



animals and human labour. It is like a beautiful circle which takes the growth of the mulberry leaves, the silkworm's spinning and manual work to complete. At the end of a silkworm's life, the raw silk from the worm starts a new life cycle through the work of human beings as real silk, a product. It is a kind of continuation of the creature's life, but unlike other industries, a product is produced not at the price of killing a creature. In a natural way, with good timing, proper environment, quality materials and fine craftsmanship, the desirable outcome is yielded: silk. Peaceful and harmonious life is, in equal measure, the pursuit of the Chinese as a people. Silk, therefore, reflects ancient wisdom, something that should act as a guide for life in modern-day China.

Source: Wendao Journal (问道杂志)  
wendaojournal.com

# Globalising China

## Part 1: The Domestic Market of the People's Republic of China<sup>1</sup>

Rien T. Segers\*

In 1978 under the leadership of Deng Xiaoping (邓小平), China decided to gradually open up its economy to achieve more economic development. Three and a half decades later, China has become an economic force to be reckoned with, surpassing Japan as the second largest economy in the world in 2010. China's economic success is no longer purely based on low-cost manufacturing, inward foreign direct investment and export. It has evolved into a diversified economy with a seemingly inexhaustible pool of low-skilled labour and highly-educated talent, a large number of up-and-coming enterprises with a competitive spirit and refreshing business ideas.

**A**SSISTED BY MORE LIBERAL economic policies, Chinese business is going global. Since China joined the WTO in 2001, Chinese Outward Foreign Direct Investment (OFDI) has surged, the number of Chinese greenfield investments has grown tremendously and Chinese companies are increasingly acquiring targets in foreign markets. The staggering economic growth of China has garnered a lot of attention and, in many cases, the rise of China is perceived by governments and companies alike as a threat to national security, domestic economies and the overall business climate. How are Chinese firms, once domestic, now making the leap to becoming global entities?

### China's Economy

As the world is entering a new phase of globalisation, the economic centre of gravity is shifting rapidly from the Western world to emerging Asia. China's enormous economic development plays an integral part in the economic surge of Asia. Since the financial

crisis and economic recession in late 2008, the shift from West to East is even more tangible. Whereas Western economies have suffered and are still suffering from the crisis, Asian economies have shown more resilience in battling the demons of the global downturn. Building upon their experiences from the Asian financial crisis of 1997, Asian governments, especially China's, have accumulated financial reserves and rolled out stimulus packages to secure domestic economic stability, improve infrastructure and continue policies to gain a global footprint.

Since economic policies have gradually liberalised from 1978 onward, the Chinese economy has up until now recorded an average annual growth rate of about 10%. The rapid economic development and growth rates are mainly attributable to development in the eastern provinces and south-eastern coastal regions, the economic heartland of China,

<sup>1</sup> Part 2, Fast Foreign Economic Expansion, will be published in issue 3 of Global China Insights



### How are Chinese firms, once domestic, now making the leap to becoming global entities?

leaving peripheral regions such as the West and the North of China seemingly underdeveloped. To prevent the economy from overheating as well as to prevent excessive pollution and regionally uneven development, the Chinese government has created the all-encompassing 12th Five-Year Plan ("十二五"规划 Shíèrwǔ Guīhuà) 2011-2015.

The size of an economy is measured by its nominal Gross Domestic Product (GDP). China's nominal GDP has been growing strongly over the years (see Fig. 1) from 0.26 trillion USD in 1991 to 1.65 trillion USD by 2004. At a GDP growth rate of more than 13% on an annual base (with a slight dip during 2008 and 2009 to below 10%), Chinese nominal GDP has more than tripled in the six years since 2004. At the end of

2010, China's nominal GDP was valued at 5.87 trillion USD, surpassing Japan's 5.47 trillion USD, becoming the second largest economy in the world behind the United States (IMF, 2011). According to projections by Morgan Stanley Bank, China's nominal GDP may triple over the next ten years, making it the largest economy in the world by 2020.

Analysing the Purchasing Parity Power (PPP) per capita, on the other hand, reveals that China ranks only 85th in the world, with 6,828 USD (€4,945) on an annual base, according to statistics from the World Bank. China's per capita income adjusted for PPP is only 15% of that of the United States (World Bank, 2011).

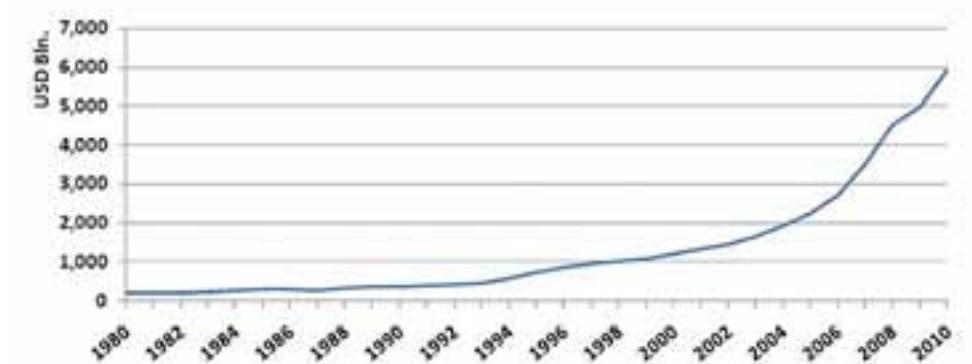


Figure 1: China's GDP from 1980-2009 in USD millions

Source: World Bank, 2011



Figure 2: Comparing Chinese provincial GDP per capita levels to nation states

Source: The Economist, 2011



These numbers illustrate that, although China has emerged as the second largest economy in the world by nominal GDP, it clearly remains a nation in development.

Major inequalities exist between the provinces in China, especially when perceived from the perspective of GDP per capita by administrative entity. Setting the province’s GDP per capita against comparable countries’ GDP per capita underscores the extensive nationwide differences (see Fig. 2). Whereas coastal provinces in the east and southeast have PPP levels similar to those of transition economies, such as Slovakia and Hungary or resource-rich states such as Saudi Arabia, South Africa and Kazakhstan, provinces in China’s interior have PPP levels similar to those of the least-developed nations.

Is China’s Economy Overheating?

The blistering pace at which the Chinese economy is growing has had positive side effects on development. At the same time, however, there is the anxiety that the ill-balanced economic growth may cause overheating. During the first quarter of 2011, the Chinese economy grew at a rate of 9.7% on the previous year, outpacing many forecasts. Despite the global

economic crisis, which slowed down Chinese exports in 2009, the economy still recorded large growth numbers due to stimulated domestic consumption. This resulted in an upward pressure on Chinese price levels. The main threat for China is inflation. Since October 2009, the Consumer Price Index (CPI) has been rising. Food prices surged 11% in the first quarter of 2011 and housing property prices have also risen.

Recently, 24 commerce associations across the country made a joint statement to support the government’s effort to defeat inflation. The former Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao (温家宝) called on local government officials to help stabilise consumer product and housing prices. The rise in wages can compensate for inflation but only for a small proportion. A combination of rising inflation, concerns about social instability and labour shortages in key industrial areas have sparked a series of minimum wage increases across China in 2010 and in the first quarter of 2011. Money supply rose by 16.6% in the first quarter of 2011 due to foreign capital inflow and growing foreign exchange reserves. To control the money supply, the People’s Bank of China (中国人民银行 Zhōngguó Rénmín Yínháng) raised its reserve requirement ratio (RRR) for

The Chinese government acknowledges the threat of unsustainably high growth rates and inflation but it is confident that it can avert potential hazard through controlling measures.



the fourth time this year, bringing the ratio to a record high of 20.5 percent. This is the tenth increase since the beginning of 2010.

Raising the RRR has slowed down bank lending, but the People’s Bank of China may now need to tighten regulations even further to control the money supply (Business Insider, 2011). The Chinese government acknowledges the threat of unsustainably high growth rates and inflation but it is confident that it can avert potential hazard through controlling measures. The question is how long the Chinese government can tame the dragon with artificial measures before a breath of fire will bury the economic landscape in ashes. The support for a stronger currency is growing wider. A stronger Chinese yuan could encourage growth in domestic consumption at the expense of investment and exports thus creating a more balanced economy (ANZ, 2011).

End of part 1

\* For a long time, Rien T. Segers was Professor of Asian Business Culture at the University of Groningen. Now he is Director of Asian Strategy of the three Northern Dutch Provinces. In addition, he serves as Professor of Asian Business Strategies at the Hanze University of Applied Science in Groningen and as Research Fellow at the International Institute Clingendael in The Hague. This article is adapted from a chapter in a forthcoming book: *Asia: Reshaping the Global Economic Landscape* (Aix-la-Chapelle: Shaker, 2013), which he wrote together with Trevor Stam.

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# Playing the Silver Hair Card

Sirius Wang,  
Jason Yu,  
Theresa Loo

## Silver Linings that Come with Age

### More Disposable Income

The silver hair segment has monthly personal and household incomes at RMB 3000 and RMB 6000 (€360 and €720) respectively, which are only a RMB1000+ (€120+) shortfall from the earnings of the mainstream segments of the post-70s and -80s (Chart 2). Furthermore, silver hair consumers probably do not have mortgage nor education fees for their children to pay. If they own residential properties, they are likely to increase

The Chinese population is ageing. According to MillwardBrown's (华通明略 Huátōng Mínglüè) forecast, 36% of the Chinese population will be 55 years old and above by 2030 (Chart 1). The tipping point for embracing innovations and adaptations for the silver hair segment is upon us. Marketers can either be proactive by rising to the challenges posed by this trend now or be forced to respond by competitive and regulatory pressures later on. What do marketers need to know about the needs and demands of the silver hair consumers? How can they approach this segment by designing age-neutral products and effective communication?

in value over time. Chinese children are also bound by filial piety and are likely to supplement their parents financially and materially. Hence many silver hair consumers have more money at their disposal than meets the eye.

It is also worth noting that other stakeholders are also buying products for silver hair consumers to use. From Kantar WorldPanel data, 24% of the products used are gifts from others. For example, a great deal of nutritional and health products are marketed as 'gift products', especially during festive seasons, and are purchased by the children and friends of silver hair

consumers. More and more marketers are starting to realise the power of the gift market for the ageing population in China. Momchilovtsi Milk created by Bright Dairy (光明乳业 Guāngmíng Rǔyè) is a successful product, especially in low-tier markets. The product is positioned around the story of 'longevity', tapping into the niche of gifting yoghurt to silver hair consumers.

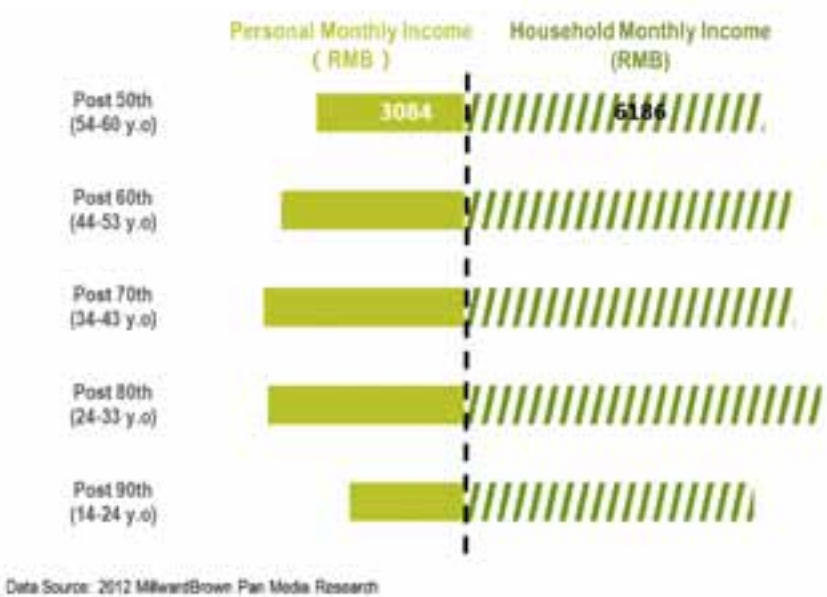
### Willing to Spend and More Brand Savvy

Not only do they have relatively more money in their pockets, today's silver hair consumers are more into repertoire

Chart 1: Chinese Population



Chart 2: Consumer Income by Age Group



purchases, meaning that they use a number of brands per category as opposed to being loyal to a single brand. These consumers also spend more and buy the best for their grandchildren. Kantar Worldpanel data show categories, such as chocolate, wine and biscuits are among the fast growing categories for this particular consumer segment (Chart 3).

Data from BrandZ also indicate that their knowledge about brands is increasing. However, brands that appeal more to them tend to be different from those that appeal more to the younger generation. Comparing the top 30 'Appeal to You More' brands chosen by consumers aged 55-70 years of age vs. those selected between 15-24, only China Mobile (中国移动 Zhōngguó Yídòng) appeared on both lists. The other 29 brands are different for the two age groups, meaning that the brand overlap rate stands at a mere 3% (Chart 4). Yet there

is still hope for bridging the gap because Japan, the nation in the world with the oldest population, has seven brands in the top 30 list that appeal to both young and old. Japan's brand overlap rate is higher at 23%. If Japan is a good indication for what

Chart 3: Top 10 Categories with Fast Growing Spending among Older Households (45+)

Top 10 Categories with Fast Growing Spending among Older Households (45+) (2012 vs. 2011)
Chocolate
Wine/Foreign Spirit
Biscuit
Solid Drink
Seasoning
Oral Care
Chinese Spirit/Saki
Fragrance
Soft Cake
Milk Powder

Data Source: National Urban, Kantar Worldpanel

Both BrandZ and Kantar Worldpanel data show a tendency for silver hair consumers to become less price-driven and know more about the brands they purchase.

an ageing China will look like in the future, then as marketers become more silver hair savvy, more brands will start to appeal to a wide age range.

### Out to Pursue and Enjoy Life

The definition of 'old' is also undergoing dynamic transformation. Silver hair consumers no longer want to just wind down, stay home and take life easy. Many are still looking for personal achievements, behaving as if they were in their prime and continuing to pursue their education, work in new careers as well as maintaining a level of overall activity not previously associated with their age segment (Chart 5 and Chart 6).

Zhang Guangzhu (张光柱) and Wang Zhongjin (王钟津) are the 'happy backpackers', famous on the internet for their global backpacking tour around seven continents and taking in more than 40 countries. As they travel, they update their journey real time on their blog. Prior to the 2012 Olympic Games in London, Yili (伊利) and Youku (优酷) aired micro-movies about the Olympic journeys of common Chinese people and featured the couple in the series. Their story inspires others to believe that people of all ages can live a fulfilling life. Their blissful golden years are now the dreams of many young people.

### More Internet and Online Shopping-savvy

BrandZ research also reveals that 37% of silver hair consumers have accessed the internet over the past week, spending 10.3 hours on average per week. This rate is higher than listening to radio at just 7.1 hours per week. They also show a higher affinity towards online video, mobile ads and cinema ads than mainstream consumers. Despite the strength of traditional media in reaching this target segment, digital media has an important role to play in an integrated marketing communication plan. In fact, the awareness of brands having advertised in the digital media by silver hair consumers has gone from 0.5% in 2008 to 7% in 2011 (Chart 7).



Chart 4: China Top 30 ‘Appeal to You More’ Brands by Ageing and Youth

China Top 30 'Appeal to You More' Brands Selected by Ageing and Youth																													
55-70 y.o															15-24 y.o														
1. Skyworth	Skyworth 创维	16. Olay	OLAY	1. Sina Weibo	新浪微博	16. China Mobile	中国移动	2. Nanshan	南山	17. Nongfu Shanquan	农夫山泉	2. Apple	苹果	17. Hitachi	HITACHI	3. China Telecom	中国电信	18. Volkswagen	大众	3. Sony	SONY	18. Baiyunshan	白云山	4. Hua Lian	华联	19. Dabao	大宝	4. Yihaodian	易记
3. China Telecom	中国电信	18. Volkswagen	大众	5. 360 Buy	360 易购	20. China Life	中国人寿	6. Sunshine Insurance	阳光保险	21. Google	Google	22. Louis Vuitton	Louis Vuitton	23. 555	555	11. Septaolves	七匹	27. Kingshifu	king shifu	12. Metersbonwe	Metersbonwe	27. Jack & Jones	JACK & JONES	13. Ping An Insurance	平安保险	28. Crest Bon (Yi Bao)	Crest Bon	14. Metro	METRO
14. Vaseline	凡士林	29. Might	美力	15. Johnson Baby	Johnson's Baby	30. Houdy	houdy	15. Sharp	SHARP	30. Yili	伊利																		

DataSource: MillwardBrown BrandZ

Silver hair consumers also partake in online shopping. Kantar Worldpanel data from actual consumers’ recordings of their FMCG purchases suggest that close to 18% of silver hair families in China bought their groceries online in 2012. This is quite astonishing and probably signals a willingness to explore new channels of shopping and online payment.

Furthermore, Taobao (淘宝) reported that there were 12,000 silver hair consumers who spent an average of RMB 340,000 (€41,000) per year, highlighting the considerable spending power of the silver hair segment. Gone were the days of little money and frugality. During the 2012 ‘double holidays’ of Mid-Autumn Festival (中秋节 Zhōngqiū Jié) and Chinese National Day (国庆节 Guóqìng Jié), tmall.com released a micro-movie called *My Father* on its official micro-blog. Calling on the young to remember how their fathers once taught them how to ride a bicycle when they were young, the film encouraged them to

reciprocate during the holidays by teaching their fathers how to shop online.

### Tackling Silver Hair Consumers

Adopting Age Neutral Product Design

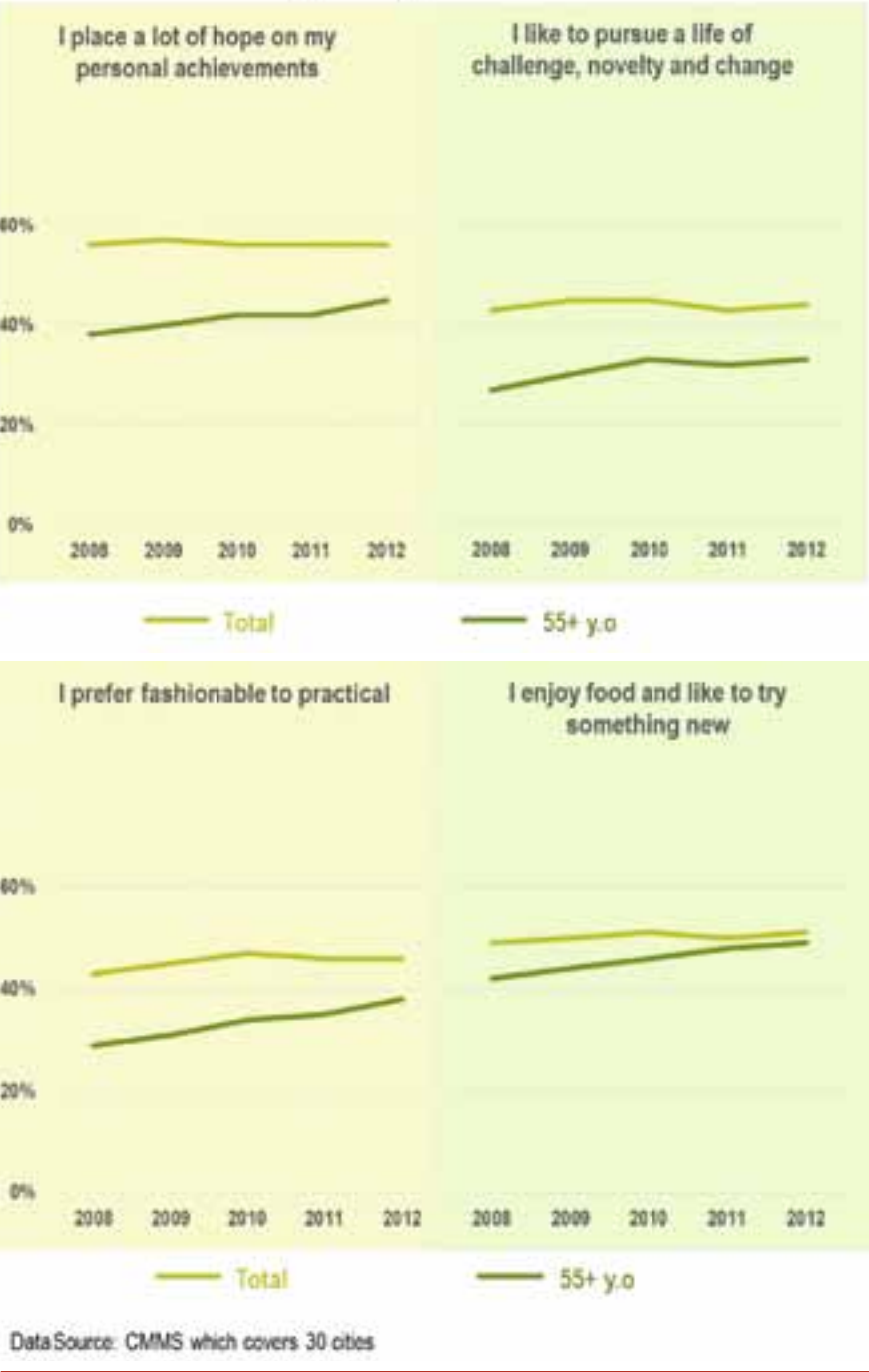
Age-neutral means to satisfy the unique needs of silver hair consumers in a way that is natural and beneficial to all ages. One example is a TV remote control with large buttons to meet the easy-to-use needs of silver hair consumers with deteriorating dexterity. This design is beneficial to and welcomed by consumers of all ages.

Ageing of the bodies and minds of silver hair consumers may affect the relevance and use of products and services they have relied upon all their adult lives. Despite these discrepancies, this generation will probably continue using the same products even as they age. It is, therefore, important

to make products age neutral, so as to be inclusive of consumers who grow into silver hair status.

The most basic principles of age-neutral are to understand the needs of silver hair consumers and then design products that are simple to use for all. The world is increasingly being designed by younger people for younger people. The current cohort of young marketers are, however, ill-equipped to tackle silver hair consumers and have to be ‘retrained’ to be sensitive to the needs of these older consumers. Proactive car companies, such as Ford in the US, explore the physical limitations of older consumers by having their designers wear a ‘third-age suit’, which simulates the experience of stiff joints, thicker mid-section and lesser eyesight. Young marketers also need to understand that silver hair consumers often have needs for services around a product, such as education on how to use a smartphone. Marketers need to know how to explain

Chart 5: Consumer Life Style Changes



things in a simple and direct way. They also need to be patient when silver hair consumers operate at a slower pace.

Age-neutral designs should be applied to products that are marketed across and bought by all ages, such as white goods, anti-ageing cosmetics, hair treatments, airline flights, home entertainment,

cars, and Fast Moving Consumer Goods (FMCGs), etc. In light of an ageing population, it is a socially responsible and smart response for marketers to make their businesses future-proof. This may involve a culture change in terms of how business is conducted and how products are designed. If and when marketers successfully adopt

age-neutral strategies and accommodate the needs of silver hair consumers, chances are, they will improve the product experience of all consumers.

### Create a Desirable and Friendly Brand Personality

Brand personality is regarded as a set of human characteristics associated with a brand. In the same way that personality is the sum of what a person is all about, brand personality is a catch-all that sums up the essence of a brand. Consumers readily attribute a diversity of personality traits to brands, such as ‘trustworthy’, ‘competent’, ‘agreeable’, ‘rebellious’. Brand personalities are created over time by a wide-ranging marketing mix (product, brand name, advertising, word-of-mouth, CEO image and brand user image, etc). These brand personalities, once built, are relatively distinct and enduring. In a marketplace full of commodity products, brand personality or its nuances can differentiate one brand from the next.

BrandZ data reveal that brands which are ‘different’ and ‘desirable’ can win the hearts of both young and old in the China market. When compared with data from Japan, ‘desirable’ and ‘friendly’ are brand personalities most liked by silver hair consumers in both countries (Chart 8). If these brand personalities are in a brand’s DNA, marketers can highlight them when communicating with silver hair consumers to enhance relevancy.

### Take a Positive and Light-hearted Approach in Communication

By far the biggest and most immediate opportunities lie in tweaking the communication of products that are purchased by all ages, making them relevant to silver hair consumers. MillwardBrown has accumulated a wealth of advertising test data via LINK test and can provide guidance on what creative elements appeal to silver hair consumers.

While silver hair consumers do not want to be patronised because of their old age, they would like their special

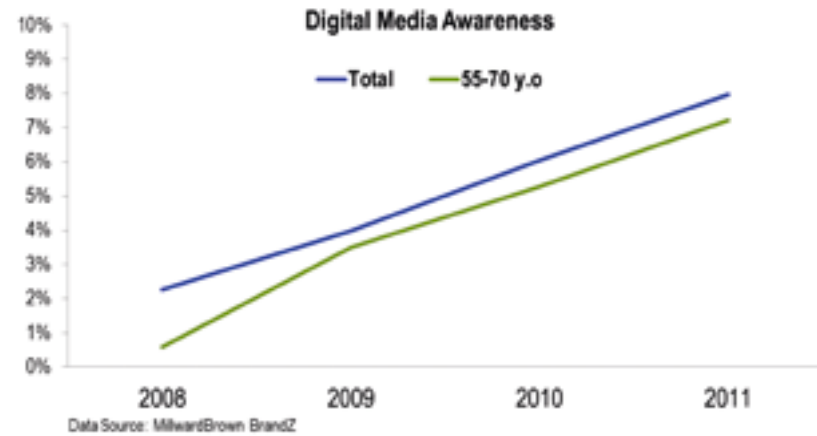


Chart 6: Consumer Leisure Activities



needs to be acknowledged and addressed. There is no worse way to alienate silver hair consumers than to suggest they should buy old people products. What companies can do is emphasise the positive rather than the negative aspects of ageing, such as focusing on internal beauty instead of external beauty, and highlighting qualities, such as wisdom, elegance, confidence to which silver hair consumers can relate. In terms of content, brands can play on nostalgia,

Chart 7: Digital Media Awareness



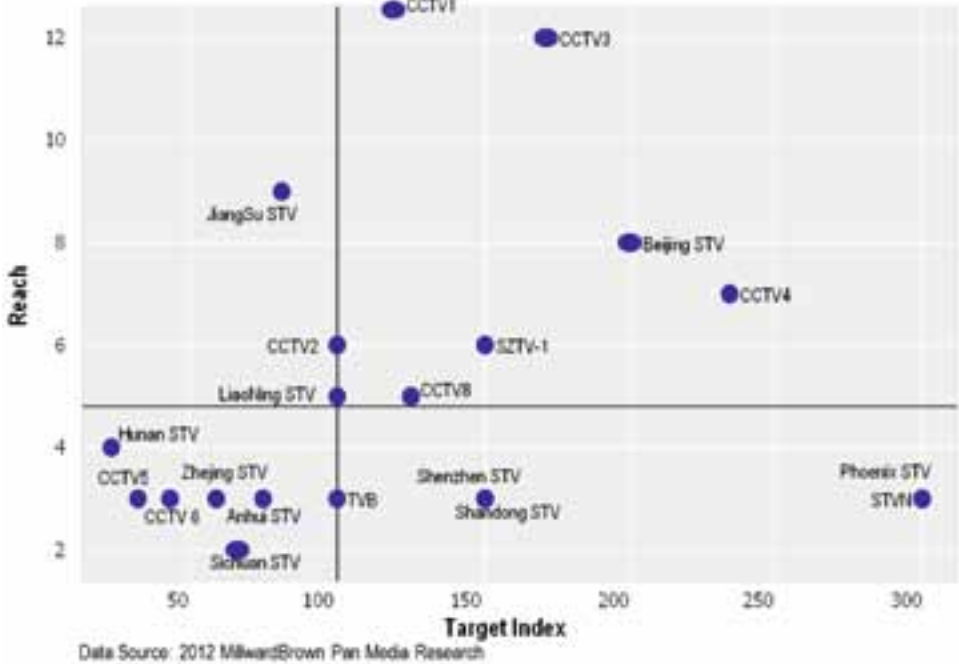
stories about animals or children, or employ music and taglines with which silver hair consumers are familiar. All these should be done in a simple and direct way, providing added value to the lives of silver hair consumers.

Deploy Effective Media Touch Points

Traditional media, such as TV, newspaper and radio, have high penetration among silver hair consumers' media usage. They are still the dominant media for reaching this consumer segment. According to MillwardBrown's 2012 Pan Media study, 93% of silver hair respondents have watched TV in the past week, at an average of 18.2 hours. Rates of reading newspapers and listening to radio are 66% and 41% respectively. In terms of content, they are interested in news, family, lifestyle, health, law and order as well as traditional culture. Channels specialising in these contents, such as CCTV1, CCTV3, CCTV4 and Beijing Satellite TV (北京卫视 Běijīng Wèishì), have both high reach and impact against this segment (Chart 9). Conversely, Hunan Satellite TV (湖南卫视 Húnán Wèishì) and Zhejiang Satellite TV (浙江卫视 Zhèjiāng Wèishì), known for entertainment and variety shows targeted at younger viewers, are less effective for communicating with silver hair consumers.

Different media also play different roles

Chart 9: Ageing People TV Channel Reach



in the purchase pathways of silver hair consumers. TV, newspaper and magazines have high penetration and are good for raising brand awareness and spreading brand information. OOH, internet and mobiles are more effective in improving brand preference, while in-store represents the key battleground for converting sales (Chart 10).

**Personalise the First Moment of Truth**  
With more silver hair consumers exploring and fast adopting modern trade, e-commerce is becoming a more and more acceptable way of shopping for silver hair consumers. From a channel marketing point of view, it is important to make sure that products are available in these new channels.

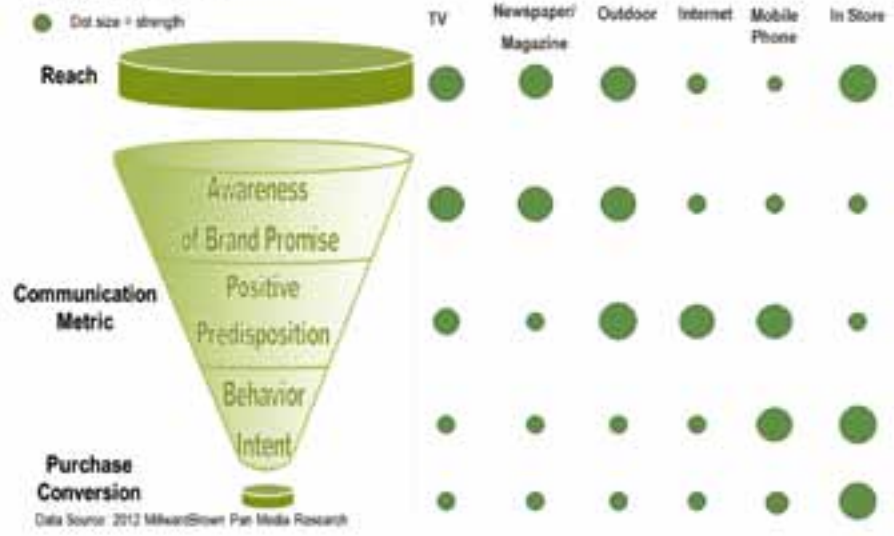
It is also important to keep in mind not to alienate silver hair consumers in other channels. Kantar Worldpanel data suggest silver hair consumers still prefer channels with personal interactions (i.e. grocery stores, direct sales and free market) which have built a trusted relationship with silver hair consumers through communication and interactions over the years. So, it is essential for marketers to ensure that products are presented at Point of Sale (PoS) with friendly interactions, such as face-to-face element of conversion in stores, even when the products are sold in self-service format. Direct sales also prove to be an effective way of selling to silver hair consumers, especially in the low tier cities.

To persuade silver hair consumers to purchase particular brands, in-store activation is as critical as advertising itself. Silver hair consumers have relatively more time on their hands and they see visiting stores as a way of having fun. This indicates that marketers need to create more in-store visuals and activation to drive the 'moment of truth'.

Chart 8: Top 5 Brand Personality of Top 30 'Appeal to You More' Brand Selected by Youth and Ageing People



Chart 10: Media Impact



**Sirius Wang**, Director, New Solutions, MillwardBrown China  
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Special thanks to Lucia Su, Haze He and Pierre Murata from MillwardBrown for their contributions to this article.

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# Tsingtao Beer: A Story of a Century

John Goodyear

Qingdao (青岛), the coastal port city in the eastern Chinese province of Shandong (山东省), is sometimes referred to as 'China's Munich'. This nickname is not just down to the German-looking Prince Hotel on the city's pier, the Bavarian-style castle where Chairman Mao (毛泽东 Máo Zédōng) stayed in 1957 or the railway station in its German Renaissance architectural style. It is very much informed by a beverage introduced by German and British traders at the start of the twentieth century: beer. For Qingdao is today both home to the Tsingtao brewery (青岛啤酒 Qīngdǎo Píjiǔ) and a 16-day festival that is the closest thing that China gets to Munich's *Oktoberfest*.

**T**HE STORY OF THE TSINGTAO brewery starts back in 1897 when the naval force of German Emperor Kaiser Wilhelm II laid claim to what was then the small coastal backwater of Kiautschou Bay (胶州湾 Jiāozhōu Wān). Conceded from the Qing Dynasty (清朝 1644-1911) to Germany in that year, Tsingtao (as Qingdao was historically known) became the capital of *Deutsch-China*. The combination of business-savvy German and British expatriates seeing a demand to supply German naval officers and soldiers with beer meant that it was only a matter of time before a brewery was founded. Just as with other empires keen to make a home away from home, the German officers would finally have their taste buds tantalised in 1903 by a beer that was made

according to the German beer purity law, the *Reinheitsgebot*, in which only water, hops and barley are used in production.

More than a century on since the local brew rolled off the production line, Tsingtao beer still uses water, hops and barley to produce its flagship crisp lager, described as having "a malty flavour and nutty sweet taste, which compliments spicy or flavourful Asian cuisine". Yet some differences are apparent: it now imports many of its ingredients from much further afield: barley from Canada and France as well as yeast from Australia. Though water from the local Laoshan Mountain (崂山) is still used and hops are brought in from western China, the brewers add domestically-grown rice to the mix, ensuring that the beer no longer adheres to the *Reinheitsgebot*; but its quintessential Chinese ingredients have made Tsingtao a Chinese beer as opposed to a beer that comes from China.

The domestic and international nature of the beer's all-important ingredients is also reflective

The domestic and international nature of the beer's all-important ingredients is also reflective of Tsingtao's broadening global reach as a beverage that is not only consumed within China but also outside its borders.

of Tsingtao's broadening global reach as a beverage that is not only consumed within China but also outside its borders. It was way back in the 1950s, shortly after renationalisation of private assets in China, that Tsingtao exported its beer to the United Kingdom. Despite being present on the British market for more than six decades, Tsingtao beer is not readily available on tap at many pubs to this day; instead, its main initial channel remains the Chinese restaurant market in the UK. Tsingtao marketing experts have since recognised the brand's confinement within Chinese eateries and have started to pursue a strategy of sponsorship to increase brand awareness, specifically taking on the form of cultural marketing and actively sponsoring, for instance, Chinese New Year (春节 Chūn Jié) celebrations in cities, such as London and Birmingham, as well as sponsoring other Chinese events, e.g. the Dragon Boat Racing Festival (端午节 Duānwǔ Jié) in London in 2010. Whilst this cultural marketing has widened awareness, Tsingtao in the UK has some way to go before it reaches a kind of brand recognition value that it

currently enjoys in other countries where Tsingtao is imported, e.g. in the United States.

Ever since the 1970s, Tsingtao has been sold in America and claims in its online marketing to be "the best selling Chinese beer in the US". Imported into the country by the largest beer importer in the US, Crown Imports, Tsingtao beer has achieved this impressive accolade by pursuing a different approach compared with just merely supplying Chinese restaurants. "Moving out of Chinatown to downtown" were the words that James Ryan, executive vice-president at Crown Imports, used in 2006 to underpin Tsingtao's strategy for the future, especially one that is informed by the steady decline of Chinese restaurants across America. Moving out of Chinese restaurants and outlets to downtown has involved thinking about the American psyche and where and when beer is consumed. As a sporting nation, America consumes some of the highest quantities of beer annually during sporting fixtures, such as the Super Bowl or the National Basketball Association (NBA) final. It is perhaps no surprise, therefore, that Tsingtao negotiated an agreement to become the sole beer supplier at the Quicken Loans Arena, home to NBA's Cleveland Cavaliers in what experts say is the first such agreement to be signed between an NBA team and a Chinese beer brand in the United States.

Using cultural marketing and reaching key male sports-watching demographic are not just confined to widening Tsingtao's international focus; they are employed as marketing approaches to advance the brand back at home in China. In 2008, the XXIX Olympiad was hosted in the Chinese capital, Beijing (北京); yet the sailing events were held on the coast in Qingdao, the home of Tsingtao beer. Seeing an ideal opportunity to use the Games to expose the brand to a domestic, even a global audience, Tsingtao submitted a successful bid to sponsor







Tsingtao beer has come a long way in a history that spans over a century.

the Games. One of two domestic beer sponsors of the Olympics, it cleverly associated its own logo with the five Olympic rings. Since those Games, Tsingtao has called upon leading Chinese Olympic athletes as promoters and spokespeople for the brand – from the gymnast Chen Yibing (陈一冰), the hurdler Liu Xiang (刘翔) or the basketball player Yi Jianlian (易建联).

Cultural marketing is a core component of Tsingtao beer's marketing strategy domestically. In August 2013, the twenty-third Qingdao International Beer Festival (青岛国际啤酒节 Qīngdǎo Guójì Píjiǔ Jié) took place in the home city of Tsingtao beer. Here, too, Tsingtao was one of the sponsors of the event, also managing to persuade the organisers to extend the beer festivities to Dengzhou Lu (登州路), the home of the original Tsingtao brewery in Qingdao's Shibei district (市北区). Having the beer festival hosted in China's beer city of Qingdao does much for brand awareness, especially as the event attracts something in the region of four million visitors each year. However, the increasing presence of beers, such as Becks from Germany, Asahi from

Japan, Carlsberg from Denmark and Heineken from the Netherlands at the Festival goes to show what Tsingtao is up against in the future: an increasingly competitive beer market with new brands entering the market.

Tsingtao beer has come a long way in a history that spans over a century. Starting out as a local brew in a rural coastal backwater to provide a kind of home away from home for German naval forces, it is now one of China's leading brands in a city of over two million people. The brand is recognised domestically and increasingly overseas through an advertisement strategy that blends cultural marketing with sports advertising. In advertising through these channels, it not only attempts to speak to its traditional customers, but ultimately seeks to win over new customers in a fiercely competitive market, both at home and abroad. Only time will tell how successful this marketing strategy is; yet a measure of its success will surely be how Tsingtao retains its market share with ever increasing foreign brands entering the Chinese beer market in the years and decades to come.

## CHINA OBSERVATIONS

# Shanghai Never Sleeps: Fast-forward Through the Stages of Culture Shock

Elleke Wiewel



In the third year of my Bachelor in International Communication, it was mandatory to spend a year abroad - a prospect that left me with a feeling of sheer fear and excitement at the same time. At that point I had never lived abroad in my life, having no idea I was about to embark on the most amazing journey I could have ever imagined. I left behind my beloved Groningen in December 2010 to first spend six months studying at "Rangsit University" in Bangkok, Thailand and then another six months working at a consulting agency in Shanghai (上海), China (中国). The picture I painted in my still inexperienced mind led me to believe that my experience in Thailand was going to prepare me for that notorious 'culture shock' teachers warned me about at university. Then by the time I arrived in China I already would have spent a good amount of time in Asia. Countries in Asia cannot really be that different, can they? China taught me different.

Thailand is called 'The Land of Smiles' for a reason. Studying and travelling in this beautiful, warm and friendly country left me smiling as well, dreading the day I had to leave yet excited to start my next adventure: China. Even if you have never been to China, you will most probably have an image in your mind of the country and its people nonetheless. The way I imagined

China before my arrival was definitely very different from reality. But then again, I feel that China is too much of a unique country to mentally prepare for anyway.

My first two weeks were filled with excitement, fear and awe. In fact, very much in accordance with the so-called 'four stages of culture shock', as asserted by Tsang-Feign (曾芬) in her volume in

1996, I went through a speedy process of experiencing feelings of 'elation', 'resistance', 'transformation', and 'integration' during my time in China. Besides constantly admiring the jaw-dropping skyline, the first week consisted of discovering the vast city of Shanghai and exploring its many different and diverse areas. Imagine going everywhere and it is wonderfully crowded; imagine people staring and photographing you like you are a movie star. There is never a dull moment. This is exactly how I first experienced China.

Alas, soon after the novelty wore off I started feeling like a petty foreigner slowly disappearing in the city's masses. The people I met spoke very little to no English. The Chinese appeared rude, dirty and bad-tempered, leading me to slowly develop an aversion towards the country and its inhabitants. I caught myself constantly comparing China to Thailand and the Netherlands, a phenomenon which I now know is natural, but not very conducive in the process of adjusting to a new culture. However, by going to work every day





and meeting more and more people, the period of resistance thankfully did not last very long and I started to accept this astonishingly crowded and smoggy city for what it was. I learned to see every day as a challenge and an adventure, something that I still try to do to this day. I tried to adjust as much as I could, and one way was by taking Mandarin (普通话 Pǔtōnghuà) classes twice a week. This really helped me to understand and appreciate Chinese culture and customs better, and because of the effort I put in I could tell the Chinese people started to appreciate me as well, making me feel more at ease with my surroundings. What I first perceived as rude and dirty now made me giggle and the stares were now flattering rather than frustrating because of the deeper understanding I began to develop of this unique and beautiful culture.

What helped me further in this 'transformation' process and will stay in my memory forever is Shanghai's astonishing nightlife. Not only is it abundant and often over the top – shark tanks in the middle of a nightclub, for instance – but it is also extremely cheap. Furthermore, the Chinese seemed to admire me for my height, blond hair and blue eyes, something they apparently had not seen all that often. When I went out, I was treated like a celebrity, was offered free drinks and a place at their table. Later I learned that this was partly because the Chinese admire

the West and it makes them look important and more sophisticated when a Westerner sits at their table. Not only did I notice this phenomenon in Shanghai's nightlife, it was largely apparent in Chinese business life as well. For example, imagine being the only foreigner at work and one of your tasks is to attend meetings with Chinese clients, even though comprehension is at a bare minimum and not sufficient enough to take minutes. Yet somehow, my presence was appreciated. To me, it was intriguing that mere nationality and looks could mean so much in a megalopolis like Shanghai.



With Shanghai's incredibly fast growth also come the downsides of Westernisation which were noticeable in the sense that it was hard to find 'the real China' at the beginning. However, after a time my Mandarin was strong enough to ask some of my Chinese colleagues to point me in the right direction. Together with some serious exploring of my own I started to find neighbourhoods where nobody spoke English. Enormous families were living together in tiny houses and small restaurants served proper Chinese food. I had found the real China! This is when I feel like I entered the last stage, namely that of 'integration'. Normally at this stage, culture shock first experienced on arrival has been overcome. That was definitely true in my case. I had about two months left before my flight back to the Netherlands and was not looking forward to it. I felt like Shanghai was now 'my city'. I wanted to learn more about the culture, history and language. I wanted to see many more places in this vast country. And most of all I never wanted to leave again.

Unfortunately all good things come to an end. I decided to postpone my flight to the Netherlands with a two-week holiday back to Thailand. However, when I got there it seemed my integration with and in China was so strong that I experienced a bit of a reverse culture shock during my holiday in Thailand! How could that be, since I once felt so at home in Thailand and felt like I never wanted to leave?

The most important lesson that China has taught me is that we humans can pretty much get used to anything. One person may adjust more quickly than another and we definitely all go through different processes; but in the end, we often find ourselves amazed by the things we have achieved.

Reference:

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# A Short Story about My Life in China

Bjoern Peters

Over the last few years, China always made headlines with its fast growing economy and its promising prospects of a bright future, quite the contrary to popularly held belief. When mentioning China, most people think about short people with straw hats working in rice fields or the friendly staff at the Chinese restaurant around the corner, always smiling and bowing. To be quite honest, I was thinking about China in exact the same way.

China always had something that fascinated me in some kind of way. I liked Kung-Fu Films from Bruce Lee (李小龙) and Jackie Chan (成龙), just like any other teenager. I used to watch lots of documentaries and read books about China and Chinese history. Early on I was wise to the fact that I had to see this country with my own eyes. My plan was to stay for one year. With the help of a Chinese exchange student who I met in Germany, I applied to the Nankai University (南开大学 Nánkāi Dàxué) in Tianjin (天津) to study Mandarin (普通话 Pǔtōnghuà) and Chinese culture. It ended up being three and a half years in total.

The first day of my arrival, I could put the stereotype of the 'permanently smiling friendly little Chinese person' behind me; the taxi drivers in Beijing (北京) can be very grumpy, which of course does not mean that they are unfriendly. My friend showed me around the city, a modern city, which can be easily compared with Amsterdam, Berlin or London; it was overwhelming and it was indeed an unforgettable impression to see the Forbidden City (故宫 Gùgōng), Tiananmen Square (天安门广场) and the Great Wall (长城 Chángchéng) for the first time. Beijing indeed is a good place for sightseeing. Beside the main attractions, there are plenty of places worth seeing, for example the 'hutongs' (胡同), which are historic old preserved houses or the night market (簋街 Guǐ Jiē) with piles of culinary food.

After trying to settle down a bit, I left Beijing one month after my arrival. I took the high-speed train to Tianjin which lies about 120 km (75 miles) from Beijing. It takes about 25 minutes. Tianjin is a nice city with 'only' 14 million inhabitants. A staff member of the university was already awaiting my arrival at the railway station in Tianjin. He took me to the university, gave me a tour through the campus and brought me to my dormitory. I was happy to see my new home and roommate: a Vietnamese monk.

I was excited: my new life had just started. During the first three weeks, I received one-to-one tuition so that the Chinese tutors could gain an insight into my qualifications. The teachers were really patient with me and took good care. In China, a teacher is still an eminently respectable person; students should always address them with teacher (老师 lǎoshī). After learning the basics, I was allowed to join the regular class. My classmates were mostly Russian, Vietnamese and Korean.

Only a few weeks later I started to worry. Mandarin really is a difficult language, especially when it comes to the characters and the intonation. I was having a hard



time memorizing them. No surprise: there are about 6000 characters that are needed for the daily use like reading a newspaper. Chinese pupils study a couple of hours every single day after school additionally so that they can keep up. Unfortunately that is the only way to learn them. Luckily, there is always someone who is around you in China and it is impossible to feel lonely. I made a lot of friends and my oral Chinese improved to my amazement really fast. It is a lot of fun to practice a language, particularly when it comes to misunderstandings because of the intonation. For example:

This is my mother.  
(这是我的妈妈。Zhè shì wǒ de māma.)  
Is this my horse?  
(这是我的马吗? Zhè shì wǒ de mǎ ma?)

I tried to tell a friend who my mother was and pointed on a picture. Unluckily I used the wrong intonation and ended up with the following meaning: “Is this my horse?”

After a while, I felt more and more comfortable, even with the characters. I was now able to read the menu in restaurants and finally knew what they dished up. One of the things that I like in China is that there is always a reason to have dinner together. The Chinese love getting together and they place great value on sociability, which was a good opportunity for me to learn. As time passed, the language came easier to me than it did at the beginning. I overcame the cultural shock and I felt more and more integrated because I could now communicate with people.



As a foreigner in China, you can have a hard time if you do not understand Chinese customs and traditions. Some people may find it disturbing to get stared at, but a foreigner in some areas of China still is something quite special. It is idle curiosity and the Chinese mean no offence. Once you speak the language, try to adapt to the culture, and adopt its habits, you will be accepted more and more and may fall in love with this country.

China is a country full of contrasts. On



the one hand, you can find a few of the most developed cities in the world; and, on the other hand, a traditional China with its temples and traditions as well as stunningly beautiful environments. I do not regret a single day of my decision. Before I came to China I had this special picture of China as many people have it. After the three years among the people, I now have a completely different point of view. Yet, you need to witness it yourself to believe it.

# Chinese Holiday-makers

Stefan Penchev

Western people’s individualistic mentality is traceable in every single element of their life, even in the way they holiday. Although we do have nationwide bank holidays, a proper vacation is when you plan it on your own and enjoy it at a desired time in the year. The Chinese cannot choose the time of their vacation. Their days off are specified by the central government and apply to the whole country of 1.3 billion people. The major holidays are the lunar New Year (春节 Chūn Jié) with about three days off, about the same for National Day (国庆节 Guóqìng Jié) on 1 October and Labour Day (劳动节 Láodòng Jié) on 1 May as well as several other shorter holidays of one or two days off. It is ubiquitous to swap working days around the major holidays with weekends to make a longer holiday; this way the Chinese enjoy about seven days off for New Year and National Day.

Having the world’s most populous country launch their travels at the same time presents a huge challenge for the transportation system. Millions of migrant workers and students return home, and travel groups flock to get the affordable train tickets. It is estimated that during the 40 days of the Chinese New Year in 2007, the trains transported “an average of 3.9



million passengers a day” (*Wikipedia*). To get an idea of the growth of holiday-making in China, compare these numbers with 2013: “Chinese railways carried 65 million passengers between 28 September and 5 October, a record high over the same period in history. On Tuesday, de facto National Day, the total number of railway passengers hit 10.33 million, breaching the 10-million mark for the first time. An average of eight million people travel by train each day from 30 September to 4 October (China Railway Corporation via Xinhua). During the holidays in China, train tickets are in short supply and individuals count themselves lucky if they can get a

train ticket a week before their journey. Nowadays, more Chinese people can afford a car or two, so the pressure has moved towards the highways. Traffic jams of several kilometres are not uncommon during holidays. I have attended tourist fairs where travel agents promote their holiday packages and these venues were absolutely thronged. If an egg were thrown, it was bound to fall on somebody’s head. People start arriving five hours before the doors open, which is well before sunrise. The great majority of them are elderly people and pensioners eager to discover new places they have not been able to visit before. The Chinese prefer to travel with organised groups for



very practical reasons: it is cheaper, as the travel agents can negotiate better flight and hotel prices. Chinese travel agents offer a range of holiday packages: DIY trips with booking of plane tickets or tickets plus hotel reservations. There are also guided trips of which there are two kinds: the cheaper ones include obligatory visits to production companies and shops with a marketing purpose and normal guided tours without merchandising.

My first experience as a holiday-maker in China was to celebrate the lunar New Year in 2007 by a guided trip to the 'Florida of China': the tropical Hainan Island (海南岛). It is the venue of many local and international festivals, carnivals, competitions and shows – 55 of them between January and October 2013. The coastal tourist town of Sanya (三亚), Hainan (海南) hosted the 2011 BRIC summit – the economic union of Brazil, Russia, India and China – which became BRICS after South Africa joined.

People in Western countries associate a tropical island with a week or ten days of sunbathing, swimming and scuba-diving. The Chinese do not have the tradition of

spending their precious days off at the same place lying under the sun trying to get this amber suntan that we are used to boasting about. Firstly, in the Far East – China, Korea and Japan – the white face is a symbol of beauty, so on a sunny day in China, it is normal to see women with visors completely covering their faces. Secondly, as mentioned before, the Chinese have no summer vacation. Their longest holidays are in February and October and they are much shorter than the summer holiday of a European.

In Sanya, our group was ushered to the tropical beach just as you would go to see an attraction. During the half an hour allocated for visiting the beach everyone was walking on the sand in complete attire. We just stood there, walked around the waterfront, trying to stay dry and filling our shoes with sand. On the next day we did take our share of sunbathing at Sanya beach, though. However there were still people in trousers, formal shoes and long-sleeved shirts hiding under umbrellas from the February sun.

Nowadays more Chinese people choose to spend their holidays abroad – mostly



in Asian countries – but European and North American destinations are becoming increasingly popular. The Chinese are welcomed and desired tourists: compare China's 14.3% record annual increase of millionaires with 12% in Switzerland and 6.7% in Germany, which is the country with most millionaires in the EU.

Chinese people are ardent travellers. They holiday differently from the West. They travel, they learn, they are restless and always on the move. The Chinese people yearn to learn as much about the world for as short a time as possible. Someone once said about China: "Let her sleep for when she wakes she'll shake the world", and so she did. Living in China I cannot help but be amazed by the prestissimo of development in every area. Their traditions in holidaying are certainly one of the keys to their success.

DOING  
BUSINESS  
WITH CHINA



# Branding in China: The Story of Link Design

Interviewed by Liu Jingyi (刘婧一)  
Written by Ingrid Fischer

Link Design is a creative design agency with branches both in Amsterdam and Shanghai (上海). The company is specialised in branding in the broadest sense of the word: from strategy, logo and visual identity to brochures, packaging, websites, SEO strategies, campaigns and kick-off events. Link Design focuses on integrated design: created from the core competence of a brand, visualising the corporate DNA in all communications suitable for the market in which the brand operates. In this issue, GCI interviewed Mr. Marc de Roo, Link Design's CEO Creative Strategy Director to learn more about their story in China.

*Mr. De Roo, thank you for your enthusiasm to share your story about doing business with China. First of all, I'm curious about what made you come to China in the first place?* The first time I went to China was in 2008, when I visited Hong Kong (香港 Xiānggǎng). I was immediately intrigued by how fast the economy was moving. Until then, I had always looked towards New York and London as interesting markets, but suddenly I discovered

the many possibilities of the Chinese market. What struck me was the large-scale transition from Original Equipment Manufacturers (OEMs) to Original Design Manufacturers (ODMs). There was a clear shift from companies that manufacture products or components bought and retailed by other companies to companies that design and manufacture products which are then specified and branded by another firm for sale.





*What does the transition mean to you or your company?*

This movement towards branding, which I particularly noticed in the Pearl River Delta region (珠江三角洲 Zhūjiāng Sānjiǎozhōu) provided major possibilities for my company in China. I began doing research on Shenzhen (深圳), Shanghai and a few different cities. I found, particularly during the China Import and Export Fair (中国进出口商品交易会) in Guangzhou (广州) a huge number of upcoming Chinese companies. Some of these companies would actually soon emerge as some of the world's biggest. However, none of them featured in the lists of top 100 global companies. I thought this was strange, so I decided to focus my attention more on helping Chinese outbound investment, and on figuring out how I could actually help Chinese manufacturers and Chinese factories make the transition from OEM to ODM.

*You clearly observed an important transformation in the Chinese economy. But identifying a trend is one thing, actually setting about helping Chinese manufacturers and factories is quite another. Did you receive any support?*

The Hong Kong investment agency, InvestHK, were highly supportive, offering free advice and services to overseas companies looking to set up

an office in Hong Kong. The China Council for the Promotion of International Trade (CCPIT) Shenzhen (中国国际贸易促进委员会深圳市分会) and CCPIT Shanghai (中国国际贸易促进委员会上海市分会) lent me a helping hand, too. The CCPIT promotes China's international economic and commercial interests by developing business cooperation and exchanges with foreign countries.

*What did you first find when developing a strategy for Chinese companies making the transition from OEM to ODM?*

First, we started out with a focus on designing for the European market, helping Chinese manufacturers create products and branding for that market. Over the last three years, however, that has changed completely. I realised that most Chinese manufacturers are not really interested in branding all that much just yet. They are more product design-orientated and less branding-oriented. They want product designers to help them create a product that sells. In other words, they want an immediate result. In marketing, though, you have to invest first before you can earn money. It is a more long-term process that a lot of Chinese manufacturers are not very comfortable with yet.

*Has this insight led you to make some changes?*

Yes, that's right. This perspective has slightly changed our business objective. We have turned it into more of a two-way street now. We help Chinese manufacturers with European branding and we are also helping European clients with their branding for the Chinese market. This presents us with a lot of the same difficulties and challenges as branding Chinese products for the European market does. Take cultural differences, for instance: you have to think about how to communicate the product – from the colours, the features and benefits of a product. They all ride on the cultural context. But the benefit for us in also helping European companies enter the Chinese market is that these companies are more used to Western ideas about branding, so they show a greater willingness to invest in this area.

*How can you help your European clients get to know the Chinese customer and to execute their market plan?*

We first advise our European clients to come

The appearance of certain numbers, too, is important. The unlucky number four should be avoided; it would be better to use the lucky number eight instead.



*Drawing on your several years' experience of China, what would say is a key difference between the European and Chinese market and their respective customers?*

Contrary to the European market, Chinese consumers attach importance to authenticity and heritage. This involves advertising certain company features, something

the European market tends not to do. European companies want to be modern and look forward instead of looking back at the past. But when a European company goes to China, past achievements are something they should actively consider and really advertise: the Chinese embrace heritage and authenticity. For example,



we are working for some companies that have been in existence since the 1600s or the 1800s. For a European, this would be a rather small and unimportant detail, but that is something you would want to emphasise in China, making it clearly visible on your logo, for example.

*Other than authenticity and heritage, don't the Chinese attach great importance to endorsements of products?*

Quite so! Handshakes with ministers or mayors are very important in China, so we encourage our clients to make sure they capture these moments for later use, especially when influential people endorse the product. If you have a good relationship with your mayor, ask for an endorsement letter stating that you have been established in this town for a certain number of years and have always been a loyal citizen, for example. This gives companies a leg up in China, especially if you have a photograph of the mayor handing you the letter. Small details like this in a brochure may mean the difference between success and failure in some cases.

*Visuals appear important in China: from photos to copies of letters. What other visual aspects should companies consider when entering the Chinese market?*

Once again, there is no such thing as one China and there is not one kind of Chinese audience. However, some general commonalities exist, such as the popularity of the colour red. The appearance of certain numbers, too, is important. The unlucky number four should be avoided; it would be better to use the lucky number eight instead. Another general tendency is greater explanation in Chinese visual presentations. The visual design needs to be more educational. Brochures should therefore contain small visual representations of how to use the product; how to apply a specific make-up, for example. This is quite contrary to the European market.

*Which form of communication is the most effective in China?*

Sampling and on-premise presentations work really well for a retail product in China. A good social media strategy is also essential. Weibo (微博), the Chinese version of Twitter,

for instance, is a widely used medium in China. For business-to-business products, attending events and delivering good presentations is the most effective means of communicating. For our business-to-business clients, we really look into their communication materials and advise them on what kind of brochures they have. Is it structured well, are they emphasising the correct things?

*Do you have local people in your team to help you understand the local customs?*

We pride ourselves on having a combination of local and non-local people, both in the Amsterdam and Shanghai team. It is always very interesting to strike a good balance of how much 'local' you want to add to your international European standard. We are hired by the Chinese because we are European. They want something non-Chinese, but at the same time they believe the Chinese way is the safest way, calling on us to listen to the local people on your team as they understand what they want. We particularly see this in the choice of design, use of colours or type of photography. If our advice becomes too local, though, we are no longer of any benefit to them because then we reduce ourselves to a 'just another' expensive design agency.

*Can you provide an example of one of your successful stories, either in the Chinese or the European market?*

For the European market, it has got to be the design of the new brochures for the Amsterdam branch of the Industrial and Commercial Bank of China (ICBC) (中国工商银行 Zhōngguó Gōngshāng Yínháng). Initially, we had an interesting discussion about the use of colour. The colour red is ICBC's main colour. In China, it represents wealth, going forward and strong belief. On the Shanghai Stock Exchange, all the figures that go up are in red and the ones that go down are in green. Considering that it is exactly the opposite compared to European stock exchanges, it could create very big problems when presenting an annual report for the Dutch market. We were able to advise ICBC on how to adapt the design

and the use of colours for the Dutch market. In the end, they were very happy, so much so that the set-up of our brochure is now being copied by other ICBC branches throughout Europe.

*And for the Chinese market?*

For the Chinese market, we had a Dutch client who has a completely new biochemical factory in China. Their product has the 100% Chinese GS label. That is quite unique because they are a Dutch company. We created a new communication strategy for them so they could present their company at fairs throughout China - by designing sampling products, a website, a brochure and iPad presentation all within one concept. The new communication materials turned the factory into a brand itself, which has been very successful for them.

*Any final thoughts for a Western company which wants to enter the Chinese market?*

They need to be very clear about the product, not about how to sell the product. We advise going back to the core of the product, starting all over again. Who wants to buy this product? How am I going to reach these people? What communication materials do I need to reach these people? Last but not least: come to China! Not just for a week, but for an extended period of time to really get to know the market.



## Karaoke, Take Me Home

Huang Sangruo (黄桑若)

Do Chinese people have something in common when it comes to recreation? Yes, they love karaoke! According to a recent report from Horizon China, a leading market research firm, karaoke is one of the top three social activities among the Chinese today, followed by dining together and sports. It has definitely become a big part of regional culture in China.

**O**RIGINALLY INVENTED IN JAPAN, karaoke underwent rapid development in China during the 1990s and has now spread to every corner of the country. One of the most popular types of karaoke venues is KTV, i.e. Karaoke Television. In China, KTVs have developed into full service entertainment centres, offering comprehensive and synthetic services. Besides karaoke boxes, they also include bars, dining, health care and bathing facilities so as to cater specially to the needs of the Chinese consumer. Many of them even have deluxe interior designs and luxurious stereos that surpass the look and feel of a cinema.

Although karaoke is practiced worldwide, what sets the Chinese apart from the rest of the world is probably their motivation for pursuing the activity. According to the well-known American psychologist Maslow, human beings embrace five layers of hierarchical needs which move from physiological to safety, to love and belonging, to self-esteem and eventually to self-actualisation. Karaoke plays an important role in fulfilling the last three needs for Chinese people.

According to Maslow, the first need that karaoke fulfils for the Chinese is love and belonging. They refer to the need of belonging and being accepted among relevant social





Karaoke is a socialising tool that bridges the gap between people.

groups, which may include friends, colleagues, professional organisations, religious groups and sports teams. Karaoke is a socialising tool that bridges the gap between people. Regardless of whether they are with a crowd of friends or with a group of co-workers, Chinese people neither feel shy about singing, nor are they obliged to listen to others sing. Someone can be singing while others are playing drinking games or even sleeping! Under no pressure to perform professionally, even the introvert will sing their hearts out to others. People take turns to sing or to listen, and they simply enjoy the happiness of participation. In other words, karaoke creates a friendly atmosphere for people to warm up, to bond, and to relate to one another. Whether one is singing or getting drunk, it is always a good time.

What is more interesting is that some business deals are also negotiated during karaoke sessions. The Chinese have long been well known for their 'dining table culture', vividly portraying the phenomenon that a great deal of successful communication is achieved at the 'dining table'. While Westerners tend to talk business in offices, cafes or bars, most Chinese are more willing to

do it over dinner, mixing business with pleasure. Now, this 'culture' has extended to include karaoke. After dining, the business partners will invite the other party to go to the KTV to further discuss business projects. They sing and play together to create a sense of closeness to one another and eventually close a sale during the karaoke session.

Maslow's second need that karaoke fulfils for the Chinese is self-esteem. Referring to the need to be recognised, respected and valued by others, self-esteem may be attained by engaging in an activity, a profession or a hobby. Many Chinese companies have developed the tradition of holding karaoke contests. The winners can benefit greatly from the contests, not only by gaining recognition and prizes but also by getting bonuses and even a future promotion. As a result, being able to sing well is certainly a valuable skill to have.

The final Maslow need that karaoke fulfils for the Chinese is self-actualisation. Self-actualisation refers to the need to realise full potential and achieve greatness. Karaoke has met this need in various ways. First, it apparently has made average people feel like superstars,

no matter how badly they sing. There is usually a wide selection of Chinese music, other Asian music and Western music available. So it is easy for participants to find songs they are good at. Additionally, most karaoke machines on the market today come with a scoring function. This feature has widened karaoke's appeal and introduced an element of competitiveness into the pastime.

Second, karaoke has definitely served as an outlet for self-expression. People may perceive self-actualisation very differently and consequently express their desires in various ways. Some express it through parenting, playing sports or creating, while others simply need a microphone to sing and a stage to perform. The boxes in KTVs fortunately happen to agree with Chinese people's personalities. That is, they want to let out their emotions, to vent their angst, to release their stress and to relieve their feelings. But yet, they do not want too much publicity for that.

In Japanese, the word 'kara' is short for 'karappo' meaning empty, and 'oke' is short for 'okesutura' meaning orchestra. However, can this empty orchestra or the one-man show

really satisfy a hierarchy of needs? I interviewed a friend of mine. For him, a regular KTV night with friends usually started at 9 p.m., and it often lasted so long that the earliest time anyone would leave was at 2 a.m. He said that he felt obliged to participate in this monthly activity, and did not really have all that much fun. "Karaoke is like an urban illness," he commented, "the longer you hang out in the KTVs, and the later you go home, the more you will actually feel a sense of emptiness." He went on to say that everybody had a blast at the karaoke party but at the same time they also felt perplexed about their lives.

It is hard to describe how popular karaoke is in China. Nowadays, karaoke is even going mobile with mobile devices. Many young Chinese people like singing karaoke on computers or mobile phones, and then uploading their recorded pieces to various websites. This makes it even easier for Chinese people to enjoy karaoke whenever and wherever they want.

Apparently, technology has diversified the way in which people enjoy karaoke, and consequently it also increases the potential for karaoke to meet even more needs. For instance, mobile karaoke is a great handy tool to relieve the pressure at anytime of contemporary people's daily life and work. It also compensates those who are reluctant to attend the KTVs. All in all, singing karaoke is no longer simply a means of recreation for the Chinese people. It is a self-rewarding and self-fulfilling experience they want to take on for a life-long time.





# Taiji Roliball: When Fitness Meets Fashion

Hao Cui (郝翠)

People doing morning exercises in a park is one of the special scenes you can see in almost every city in China. If you visit Chinese parks in the morning, you may see a group of Chinese people doing aerobics to music holding a racket which absorbs a ball like a magnet, making the performance seem just like a graceful collective dance. This special sport is called Taiji Roliball (太极柔力球 Tàijí Róulìqiú), also named Taiji Bailong Ball (or Taiji White Dragon Ball) (太极白龙球 Tàijí Báilóngqiú). It has become increasingly popular not only in China but all over the world in recent years.

**T**AIJI ROLIBALL ORIGINATED from Jinzhong city (晋中市), Shanxi province (山西省). It was invented by the Professor of Sport, Bai Rong (白榕) from the Shanxi Jinzhong Health School (山西晋中卫校 Shānxī Jìnzhōng Wèixiào) in 1991. As a boxing teacher, Professor Bai Rong tried to look for a way to prevent his students from getting injuries. He filled the bladder of a discarded volleyball with some water and put it in a boxing glove. Later he found that the water-filled bladder is easy to toss and catch, and that its movements are gentle and soundless like Tai Chi (太极拳 Tàijíquán). Eventually, he changed the bladder into a ball with a bit of sand in it and transformed a badminton racket into a soft-surface one with some wind holes in it. He choreographed several tossing and catching postures to form a whole set of movements. Furthermore, he added the essence of Tai Chi and the techniques from tennis and badminton to the movements to invent a new kind of Tai Chi style ball game: Taiji Roliball.

The playing technique of Taiji Roliball is not complicated. It uses the flexibility of the wrist to make sure the ball sticks to the racket. It

borrowes the strength from the waist to push and catch the ball. Unlike the hard hitting way in tennis, badminton or some other ball games, Taiji Roliball is characterised by making arc shaped movements to lead the ball. It reflects the broad and profound 'Tai Chi' culture of the Chinese nation and the strategic philosophies, such as overcoming hardness with softness, retreating for the sake of advancing and seeking for peace and completeness. It can guide and inspire people to restrain their emotions and maintain peace of mind in contemporary societies.

Taiji Roliball emerges in a new historical period where people are commonly admiring leisure and pursuing fitness. It is a whole body movement to make the neck, shoulders, waist and legs develop in a balanced way. It also has a good effect on training the central nervous system function and the development of multi-thinking because of the complex changes and random varieties of the circular movements.

Taiji Roliball has a low-level request for its playing field. It can maximally meet the needs of practitioners who are in different levels and







have different demands. It can be practiced in many different ways, such as solo play, double play, multi-play or net separated competition to achieve the purposes of fitness, entertainment, performance and competition. Thus, it has rapidly become a fashionable sport in Jinzhong city after its invention. The movement was further popularised nationwide afterwards. The integration of traditional Tai Chi philosophy and modern fashion elements has led other countries to develop strong interests in Taiji Roliball.



After promoting and popularising it for more than 20 years, there are now more than 20 million people participating in this sport. Taiji Roliball practitioners can be found in 27 provinces and cities in China, and in more than 20 countries and regions all over the world, such as Korea, Japan, Singapore, Australia, the United States, Germany and the Netherlands. The number of participants is increasing at the rate of a million people per year.\* Taiji Roliball is also one of former Chinese premier Wen Jiabao's (温家宝) favourite sports. During German Chancellor Angela Merkel's visit to China in 2006, Premier Wen introduced Taiji Roliball to her, and personally demonstrated how to play the ball.

Taiji Roliball has become one of the outstanding physical exercises that is suitable for all ages. With its unique charm and elegant style, Taiji Roliball is about to be a new fashion of Chinese sports. Now it is stepping into the world to show its eastern beauty.

*\*All data mentioned in this article is from Jinzhong Roliball Association (晋中市柔力球协会)*

## Guzheng: An Ancient Beauty for Thousands of Years

Ding Xiyuan (丁喜媛)

AESTHETIC  
CHINA

**G**UZHENG (古筝, also called Chinese zither) is an ancient Chinese string instrument with a history of more than 2500 years. It emerged in Qin State (秦国) in the Warring States Period (战国时期 475 BC-221BC), and as a result, it has also been called 'qínzhēng'. 'Gu' in guzheng stands for 'ancient' in Chinese, and 'zheng' is explained by Liu Xi (刘熙), a notable classical scholar from the Eastern Han Dynasty (东汉 25-220), as "plucking the strings quickly makes a series of 'zhengzheng' sounds" (施弦高急, 铮铮然也 Shīxiángāojí, zhēngzhēngrányě), which means that guzheng is named for the sound it produces. Guzheng was introduced to Japan, Korea and Vietnam during the Wei and Jin Dynasties (魏晋时期 220-420), making guzheng the ancestor of the Japanese koto, the Korean gayageum and the Vietnamese đàn tranh.

Guzheng is a beautiful instrument, pretty and slender. It has a rectangle wooden sound box and a surface ornamented with engravings, shell carvings, embossment, or lettering in the margin, with tight strings arched across movable bridges along the length of the instrument. In the earliest days of the development of guzheng, it only had five strings, which then increased to twelve in the late Warring States Period, to thirteen in the Tang Dynasty (唐朝 618-907), to sixteen in the last period of the Qing Dynasty (清朝 1644-1911), and now the number of strings is up to 18-25 or more.

Guzheng is sometimes also called 'the King of Instruments' and 'the Oriental Piano' for its beautiful tones. Owing to the high tone quality and rich tone colour, its sounds can be reminiscent of a scenic countryside, cascading waterfalls, gurgling springs, singing birds and fragrant

flowers, a breeze, rain and thunder. Anyone who watches the guzheng performance will be intoxicated by it and the voice is so beautiful and sweet that it remains lingering long in the air.

Many masterpieces are played on or accompanied by guzheng, such as *Night Chant in Fishing Boat* (渔舟唱晚 Yúzhōu-chàngwǎn), *Jackdaws Playing in the Water* (寒鸦戏水 Hányā-xìshuǐ), *Autumn Moon over the Han Place* (汉宫秋月 Hàngōng-qiūyuè), *Lofty Mountains and Flowing Water* (高山流水 Gāoshān-liúshuǐ), *Lotus Blossoms Emerging from the Water* (出水莲 Chūshuǐlián), etc. All these masterpieces allow the instrumentalists to fully express their feelings, and enchant the listeners with their pure and understated melodies that unfold softly and float through the air. No wonder that so many poets speak highly of guzheng and that they muse about it in many a poem.

A poet shares his personal feelings in the form of a poem. And in Chinese poetry, the guzheng plays an important part in a poet's life. Guzheng has become a kind of cultural symbol in the world of Chinese poetry. It brings a state of silence, tranquility and even sensibility and sadness to mind. However, there are examples that provide us with another view of guzheng. In *Listening to the Guzheng Music* (听筝 Tīngzhēng) by Li Duan (李端 743-782), a talented poet from the Tang Dynasty, the guzheng acts as a tool to convey love. The poem tells us a love story of an attractive, adept guzheng player who feels an immediate attraction to one of her listeners. But, from the moment the player plucks on the exquisite guzheng, the listener is too deeply absorbed in her spellbinding guzheng music to notice her. Cleverly, the beautiful player with her fair and slender fingers plays a few irregular, wrong notes

with the intention of drawing attention to herself throughout the performance.

An elegant guzheng performance fills people with a feeling of beauty, not merely because of the artistic conception that the melodic tone and heart-shaking rhythm generate, but also because of the instrumentalist's dramatic stage performance with abundant emotions revealed by his or her poise, gestures, fingering, expressions in his or her eyes, and even by how he or she dressed. All these 'visual effects' strengthen the beauty of guzheng by means of the fusion of sound and vision. It is the instrumentalist who endows the musical composition with life force and energy. Intrinsically, the instrumentalist's rhythmical body movements and gestures create a beautiful visual music, which is appealing to the audiences and helps them to grasp the charm of the music piece. The guzheng performance is an aural as well as a visual delight.



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# The Paragon of Beauty: Chinese Tea Ceremony

Teng Jiaqi (滕嘉琪)

**C**HINESE PEOPLE like drinking tea. What tea is to Chinese people can be compared to what coffee is to Western people. It is considered one of the seven necessities of Chinese daily life, along with firewood (柴 chái), rice (米 mǐ), oil (油 yóu), salt (盐 yán), soy sauce (酱 jiàng) and vinegar (醋 cù). Lin Yutang (林语堂 1895-1976) wrote in his book *The Importance of Living* (《生活的艺术》 Shēnghuó De Yìshù), “Chinese people drink tea at home, or drink tea at a teahouse; some like to drink alone, some like to drink with others; they drink tea while having meetings, they also drink tea while resolving problems, they drink tea before breakfast, they also drink tea at midnight, as long as Chinese people have a pot of tea, they are happy no matter where they are.” Tea adds more flavour to Chinese daily life.

There are two ways of drinking tea in China: one is ‘mix drinking’ (混饮 hùnyǐn), which involves putting sugar, salt, milk, shallot, orange peel, mint, longan or dates into the tea. Any condiments can be added according to personal taste. The second way of drinking tea is ‘pure drinking’ (清饮 qīngyǐn), which means making tea only from tea leaves and hot water, no added condiments that affect the original flavour of the tea. Pure drinking is divided into four levels. Drinking tea from a bowl to quench your thirst is called ‘drinking tea’ (喝茶 hēchá). If you pay attention to the colour, smell and taste of tea, and you pay attention to the quality of the water and the tea set, slowly savouring the tea is called ‘tea tasting’ (品茶 pīnchá). If you are particular about the environment, atmosphere, music, brewing technique



and interpersonal relationship between the person making the tea and who they are making the tea for, it is called ‘tea art’ (茶艺 chāyì). When the activity of brewing tea is integrated with philosophy, ethics, and morality in cultivating morality and tasting life to achieve the mental enjoyment and purification of the personality, it is called ‘tea ceremony’ (茶道 Chádào) which is the highest state of drinking tea.

Chinese tea ceremony is a real art form. To perform the ceremony, six elements are needed: tea leaves, a tea master, water, tea set, brewing technique and the environment.

To achieve the perfect tea ceremony, the six elements have to bring out the best in each other.

The beauty of Chinese tea starts with the sensory organ. If you look at the Chinese character of tea (茶 chá) you will notice all the elements of nature that the character is made up of. When the ancient Chinese created this character, they purposely put the character for human (人 rén) between that of grass (草 cǎo) and of wood (木 mù), to convey that humans live amidst nature, absorbing the spirit of nature. The numerous shapes and colours of tea are pleasant to

see, and when we appreciate the smell of tea and taste the flavour of tea, we are fully enjoying the gift of nature.

Tea can also be called Ming (茗). Tea leaves picked early in Spring are referred to as tea; tea leaves that are picked later are called Ming. Over the centuries, Chinese people have given many beautiful names to tea, one of the most beautiful names is Jia Ming (佳茗) which means excellent tea. Su Shi (苏轼 1073-1101), a poet from the Song Dynasty (宋朝 960-1279) compared tea to the paragon of beauty in a poem: “A playing little poem is made in order to make you smile, the charm of fine tea is always likened to a great beauty.” (戏作小诗君莫笑，从来佳茗似佳人 Xìzuò xiǎoshī jūn mòxiào, cónglái jiāmíng sì jiārén). Tea is delicate, elegant and quiet like beauty.

The tea master, the individual performing the tea ceremony – usually a woman – is the most fundamental and the most beautiful element of the tea ceremony. The beauty of the tea master is the highest form of natural beauty and social beauty. It is also the combination of physical beauty and spiritual beauty. Studying the tea ceremony can make the tea master reach the harmony of expressive beauty, physical beauty and spiritual beauty.

The ancient Chinese used to say “Water is the mother of tea, the tea set is the father of tea” (水为茶之母，器为茶之父 Shuǐ wéi chá zhīmǔ, qì wéi chá zhīfù). It brilliantly portrays that the quality of water has a big influence on the quality of tea. The role of water in making tea can be compared with the role of mother towards her child. *The Book of Tea* (《茶经》 Chájīng) written by Lu Yu (陆羽 733-804) in the Tang Dynasty (唐朝 618-907) has clear regulations on water: “the water from the mountain is best, the water from the river is in the middle, the water from the well is inferior”. Tea leaves can be described as the spirit of tea, and water as the body of tea. Only when the best water is used to make tea can people enjoy the tea to its fullest.

As ‘the father of tea’, a beautiful tea set has extremely high aesthetic value. Good tea must be prepared using a good tea set, one bringing out the best in the other. *The Book of Tea* recorded that there were 25 different kinds of tea sets during the Tang Dynasty. Different kinds of tea should be prepared using the corresponding tea sets. Today there are countless precious and beautiful tea sets.

The technique of brewing tea also plays an important role in the tea ceremony. The beauty of the technique is mainly represented in the method and action of brewing tea. Different types of tea should be brewed using different brewing methods. However, the common procedure of brewing tea is: prepare, boil water, prepare tea, warm-up tea wares, add tea, add water, rinse, time, serve tea, taste tea, have an intermission, infuse several times and restore the tea set. The different parts of the method usually have very beautiful names, e.g. the act of adding tea is called ‘Oolong into the palace’ (乌龙入宫 Wūlóng-rùgōng), the act of serving tea is called ‘auspicious dragon bring rain, phoenix nod’ (祥龙行雨，凤凰点头 Xiánghóng-xíngyǔ, fènghuáng-diǎntóu) which is a metaphor for pouring tea liquor from the serving mug to

the teacups fast and evenly, and when there is not much tea liquor in the serving mug, change to the action of nodding slowly with rhythm which also contains the meaning of respecting the guests. Good brewing technique not only fully displays the aroma, colour and taste of the tea leaves, but also brings about aesthetic enjoyment.

The tea ceremony is a poetic art form aiming to purify the soul, so that people’s attention is drawn to the environment in which the tea ceremony occurs. The beauty of an environment is mainly dependant on a quiet and beautiful surrounding, graceful view, warm and sweet interpersonal relationship between the people present at the ceremony and a leisurely mood.

The beauty of the tea ceremony is unique and it is richly influenced by the traditional Chinese culture. From the colourful and diverse tea leaves to the calm, gentle, extraordinary refined tea master; from the clear and fresh water to the precious beautiful tea set; from the natural, elegant brewing tea technique to the peaceful environment – they are all penetrated with the charm of the art. To appreciate the beauty of the Chinese tea ceremony and achieve spiritual sublimation, all sensory organs need to be mobilised.





# Autumn in China: The Beauty of the Seasonal Changes

Jan B.F.N. Engberts

All photos by Du Yongle (杜永乐)

**W**HEN AUTUMN COMES, the fresh colours fade away, the sun lowers and the whole atmosphere changes to a more pensive mood. The autumn makes us think about decline, loss of strength, and impermanence.

Ancient Chinese poets were very sensitive to the change of seasons and many poems about autumn are preserved. The following poem was written by Ma Zhiyuan (马致远 1250-1321), a poet of the Yuan dynasty (元朝 1271-1368):



Kū téng lǎo shù hūn yā,  
枯藤老树昏鸦,  
*Withered vines, old trees, a faint crow,*

Xiǎo qiáo liú shuǐ rén jiā.  
小桥流水人家。  
*A small bridge over flowing water,  
some houses,*

Gǔ dào xī fēng shòu mǎ,  
古道西风瘦马,  
*An ancient path under a westerly gale,  
a meagre horse,*

Xī yáng xī xià,  
夕阳西下,  
*The evening sun is declining.*

Duàn cháng rén zài tiān yá.  
断肠人在天涯。  
*The heartbroken trampler is yearning  
for his home.*

As is characteristic of Chinese poetry, the poet speaks directly to us. His melancholy mood is in line with the changes in nature. Flux, decline and old age are all suggested in a few words. The season has changed, so too have nature and the living creatures. The yearly seasonal change, in which the summer gradually loses its grandeur within an innumerable variety of individual processes making up nature, has been described with great beauty. The changes in intensity of the sunlight and the accompanying decrease of temperature affect the various kinds of living societies through a large number of influences. The

overwhelmingly complex transitions of decay leading to new forms of order take place on cosmic scales of magnitude.

These processes of change have been expressed in classical Chinese philosophy, perhaps in greatest depth in the Neo-Confucian thinking developed by Zhu Xi (朱熹 1130-1200). He found his metaphysical inspiration in *The Book of Change* (《易经》Yìjīng). The 'myriad things' in our universe create themselves through qì (气), the quality that is 'within shapes', providing them with actuality. Qì has been translated as vital force and is part of a duality. The other part is lǐ (理), 'above shapes' prior to qì, and serving as the principle of permanence amid flux and bringing multiplicity into unity. Both principles can be viewed as the dipolar character of the Great Ultimate Tai Chi (太极), the foremost principle of unity and wholeness. Becoming and process originate from the interplay of lǐ and qì. They can be appreciated in terms of the two modes yīn (阴) and yáng (阳). In turn, they interact with the five phases: metal (金 jīn), wood (木 mù), water (水 shuǐ), fire (火 huǒ) and earth (土 tǔ), thereby giving birth to the 'myriad things'.

A second Chinese poem, called *Autumn Air* (秋风词 Qiūfēng Cí), was written by Li Bai (李白 701-762), perhaps the greatest poet of the Tang Dynasty (唐朝 618-907):

Qiū fēng qīng,  
秋风清,  
*The autumn air is clear,*

Qiū yuè míng,  
秋月明,  
*The autumn moon is bright,*

Luò yè jù huán sàn,  
落叶聚还散,  
*Fallen leaves gather and scatter,*

Hán yā qī fù jīng.  
寒鸦栖复惊。  
*The jackdaw perches and starts anew.*

Xiāng sī xiāng jiàn zhī hé rì?  
相思相见知何日?  
*We think of each other, when do  
we meet again?*

Cǐ shí cǐ yè nán wéi qíng!  
此时此夜难为情!  
*My feelings are hard, this hour, this night!*

Yuǎn shàng hán shān shí jìng xiá,  
远上寒山石径斜,  
*Far away on the cold mountain  
a stone path leads upwards,*

Bái yún shēng chù yǒu rén jiā.  
白云生处有人家。  
*Among the white clouds is a village  
where people have their homes.*

Tíng chē zuò ài fēng lín wǎn,  
停车坐爱枫林晚,  
*Stopping my carriage, I admire the maple  
wood during the fall of the evening,*

Shuāng yè hóng yú èr yuè huā.  
霜叶红于二月花。  
*The frosted leaves are even more red  
than the flowers in early spring.*

While travelling in the cold autumn mountains, the poet is overwhelmed by the autumn colours of the maple forest, and this

AESTHETIC  
CHINA

experience leads him to stop his carriage to enjoy this sight with his whole heart. The beauty of nature has not changed in the 1200 years that passed after Du Mu wrote this poem.

The early Chinese poets experienced the world with acute and sensitive perceptions of the world's essential qualities, which led to expression of thoughtful insights in poetical language that still evokes deep meaning.

*I am grateful to Dong Jiajia (董佳嘉) for  
putting the Chinese characters into the text.*



## A Frenchman's Dedication to Chinese Teaching:

# Interview with Professor Joël Bellassen (白乐桑)

Liu Jingyi (刘婧一)

Professor Bellassen, Inspector General of Chinese Language Teaching, Ministry of Education in France, is a distinguished sinologist in France and works as Professor of Chinese at the National Institute of Oriental Languages and Civilizations in Paris. He is founder and the first president of the Association for Chinese Teachers in France and Vice President of the International Society for Chinese Language Teaching.

*Professor Bellassen, I'm so impressed by your authentic Chinese. I guess people would think you are a native speaker if they heard you on the radio. I am very curious about what motivated you to study Chinese.*

**Bellassen:** This question has been posed to me three to five times a week for the past forty years, ever since I started studying Chinese. In 1969, I graduated from high school and took philosophy as my major at university. Just before I finished the first year study, reforms in the French higher education system were underway, ones that required the students to implement two majors at the same time. For me, it was natural to select a foreign language, given my passion for languages. I initially selected Spanish but two weeks later I decided to drop this language as it was too close to French and far too common for me, opting instead for Chinese. I think the

psychological factor of wanting to do something different was probably the key factor. I simply wanted to do something different. In the late 1960s, Chinese language did not have any career value, neither the lesser practical value for future travel to China.

*Looking at this almost dead-end choice, what did your family and your friends say?*

**Bellassen:** They felt very pitiful for my choice and asked me why. I told them: "just for the day that I would be asked why". But after years, I figured out that I liked this distant language and culture. I pursued something different subconsciously. My classmates soon gave me a nickname: Chinese. "Hello, Chinese!" was a way to greet me among my classmates.

*Can I conclude that you like to do something challenging?*

**Bellassen:** I think challenging is a good word. From the aspect of psychology, there are two basic types of people: one who likes routines and regularity; the other who likes dynamics and challenges. I noticed from later experience in teaching Chinese that some children never

*It was just like we went to the moon, where you never complain about the poor living condition, but are excited about everything new.*

experience Chinese as difficult to learn. They just like doing things that are challenging to them, enjoying the process along the way. The children enjoy the language that has no letters but thousands of characters. They have great fun in accumulating their knowledge of characters from several to hundreds.

*I can imagine they have good teachers like you, but what about your Chinese teachers in the 1960s?*

**Bellassen:** Do not forget I am from France! In 1969 in Paris, there were three Chinese departments in different universities. Among my first teachers, there was Professor. Li Zhihua (李志华), a Beijing native who came to France in 1947 and translated *A Dream of Red Mansions* (《红楼梦》 Hónglóumèng) in the 1980s; there was a Hong Kong (香港) journalist and a teacher from Switzerland; and a French young lady who held a Master's degree in sinology and spoke fluent Chinese. 2014 will be the fiftieth year that China and France established diplomatic relations. In 1964, President De Gaulle started diplomatic relations with China and sent the first array of French students to China, among whom a number of students became famous sinologist later. I was one of the students sent to China in 1973.

*When you arrived in China, what differences did you find in studying Chinese?*

**Bellassen:** I never thought I could go to China when I studied in France: efficiency was low, although interest in the language was really high. My reading ability was not good. Arriving in China in 1973, which was the later period of Cultural Revolution, we felt that everything was different from what we imagined it would be under these special circumstances and in this special period. I felt so blessed to have such a precious experience! It might be hard to understand as a Chinese person, but we even led a different life from the French diplomats as we lived in a real Chinese environment among Chinese classmates and Chinese people. It was just like we went to the moon, where you never complain about the poor living condition, but are excited about everything new. I went to the countryside of China twice and got the opportunity to learn about the real China. It was after the special approval process that I was allowed to go. That was very precious in my memory.

*When you came back to France after studying in China, why did you choose teaching Chinese as your career?*







**Bellassen:** In the 1970s, a French person who was proficient in Chinese was very precious. So it was really easy to find a position as a senior translator or diplomat. But I chose to teach the language just because I like communication. My father was a teacher and also a conductor of a band. I learned teaching as a way of communication is highly related to communication arts and skills, both of which interact closely. But many people are simply not aware of this. If we take communicative ability as a required qualification when we hire a teacher, the efficiency of teaching will surely double.

*Could you give some examples about how good communication skills help with Chinese teaching?*

**Bellassen:** A good way to educate students is to cultivate their concept of future planning. If you say to your students we need to review what we have learned today, the efficacy would not be immediately obvious. But when you say that we will use the knowledge we learned today in two weeks' time when we go to Chinatown, it makes a big difference. I also incorporate my own story in China with the students' future planning. The motive of language study is nurtured in the goal-setting procedure, such as the premise that you will visit China in six months using this language to ask for directions, and it works very efficiently. I attach emphasis to cultural differences and even exaggerate the difference in my teaching as that works well in aiding understanding.

*Maybe your title as the Inspector General of Chinese teaching in France itself is a good illustration on how much effort you have given and the successes you have to your name in the classroom delivery of the Chinese language. Could you explain exactly what this position entails?*

**Bellassen:** The position of Inspector was created by Napoleon. The Inspectors are expected to be experts with independent and insightful ideas in certain areas and they are directly responsible for the ministers. Chinese language education is something very special in France as dozens of middle schools have had Chinese in their formal curriculum since 1977. Based on the fact that Chinese language was an examination subject on graduating from high school, a professor from the University of Paris was appointed as a part-time Inspector of Chinese Teaching, who was in charge of examination design and approval. At that time, we had a simple syllabus since the Chinese language was a part of the formal curriculum in primary education. In 1998, the part-time Inspector retired and I was appointed to this position since I was the President of the Association of Chinese Language Teachers in France. From then on, I embarked on a very dedicated journey to develop Chinese teaching across the country. The position of Inspector of Chinese Teaching has become a full-time position since 2006 due to the fast expansion and development of the subject. I place great emphasis on developing an already established syllabus.

*Why do you think it so important to have an established syllabus in Chinese teaching?*

**Bellassen:** An established syllabus makes Chinese a true subject or discipline in France. That is also the requirement of all the subjects in the formal curriculum. In the Netherlands, there is no syllabus in Chinese teaching yet. That is the big difference. I figured out the key point of promoting the language is to make it an examination subject in the basic education system nationwide. It should not depend on higher education or Confucius Institutes. We came to the conclusion from decades of experience that Chinese teaching should start from primary school as Chinese is a distant language to Western people and we shouldn't wait until students get to higher education.

**I learned teaching as a way of communication is highly related to communication arts and skills, both of which interact closely.**

*'Distant' is an interesting word to describe the Chinese Language. How, based on your numerous visits, would you describe China?*

**Bellassen:** I believe uniqueness is a good way to describe both the language and the country. For me, China is a whole picture connecting modernity and tradition. It is a pity, to some extent, that China is placing more attention on modernisation but is cutting the connection to tradition and history. China is the country I know best outside of France and I enjoy reading Tang poems (唐诗 Tángshī) very much. One consistent feature in China is the morning exercises, which remains my constant curiosity. If you want to know about the identity of Chinese people, you must go to Beihai Park (北海公园 Běihǎi Gōngyuán) and experience this special Chinese routine, which is an original and authentic element of Chinese culture and identity.

*Interesting perspective! It must be very appealing for your students to know about this special Chinese culture.*

**Bellassen:** That is the reason I usually exaggerate the cultural differences. It will make it easier and more fun to learn the language and culture. I really dislike the rumour that Chinese is difficult to learn. I never use easy or difficult to describe the Chinese language. French people never claim Chinese is difficult. In most cases, they think Chinese is beautiful, mysterious, complicated. I don't use the word easy, either. Can you give an example of an easy subject?



For me, mathematics is just a nightmare! Comparatively, Chinese characters are much easier.

*I know you have a 400-Character Threshold for Chinese learners to achieve the basic communication ability in Chinese. How did you define the scope?*

**Bellassen:** The economical principle of using less to achieve more applies to Chinese language study as well. Chinese is the only language that consists of two basic units: character and word. For example, the word is the only unit of French and it is easy to define frequently used words. But in Chinese, word and character have a different frequency of use; sometimes they are even paradoxical. For example, the word Sprite (雪碧 Xuěbì) is a frequently used word, but the character 碧 is not all that frequently used.

In France, we hold true a theory that in the fundamental phase of learning Chinese, students should master 400 most frequently used characters, and we object to learning characters in a scattered way or use the words as basic units instead of characters. We developed the 400-Character Threshold in 1985 so that high school students could easily set a goal for knowing more characters. There is no French explanation for the 400 characters. As a result, many students copied the page and pasted it on the bed or the wall, checking newly acquired characters marked with different colours every day. As you can see, this threshold is an effective psychology for the student to learn the characters and works especially well for students preparing for the university entrance examination.

*Brilliant idea to have a 400-Character Threshold! Can I request your permission to publish it in the back cover for our readers' reference?*

**Bellassen:** Yes, sure! It's my pleasure. Actually we also have another form with 900 characters. We mark the tones with colours so that the students can get the whole picture of the characters.





# Pingyao: The Language of Trading

Ingrid Fischer

CHINA  
CITY  
CULTURE

In July 2013, as part of the Beijing (北京) Summer Camp organised by the Groningen Confucius Institute (GCI), sponsored by Hanban (汉办) and the Communication University of China (中国传媒大学 Zhōngguó Chuánméi Dàxué), GCI arranged a excursion to the ancient city of Pingyao (平遥), a famous city of rich Shanxi (山西) businessmen and merchants. Shanxi businessmen are famous for their trading and banking skills. Instead of having great politicians, writers or poets, Shanxi produced many famous merchants who got rich from trading in salt and in coal and from banking. Therefore, to broaden our understanding of Chinese business culture, we visited the ancient city of Pingyao.

Our trip to Pingyao started with a high-speed train from Beijing West Railway Station (北京西站 Běijīng Xīzhàn) to Taiyuan (太原), Shanxi province, and from there we took a tour bus to Pingyao which dropped us off at the outer city walls of Pingyao. The bus was not allowed to enter the ancient city because it is on the UNESCO World Heritage Site List as one of

the best preserved historical cities in the world, and therefore motorised vehicles are not allowed inside the city. Instead, you can walk, ride a bicycle or, as we did, take an electrical cart. The journey on this motorised vehicle took us through many narrow streets, ones that are flanked by the original, beautifully decorated outer walls of ancient houses, bank buildings,

traditional inns and past impressive courtyards as well as beautiful temples before arriving at a beautiful courtyard-style accommodation in the traditional Qing Dynasty (清朝 1644-1911) décor. It was here where we dropped our luggage, then to follow our tour guide on foot to climb up the ancient city walls where you have a great view of the city.

The ancient city of Pingyao was added to the UNESCO World Heritage List in 1997 and includes the outlying Zhen Guo Temple (振国寺) and the Shuang Lin Temple (双林寺). Together with the ancient city wall, these three sites are regarded as the particularly unique and beautiful treasures of the city. The first treasure, the city wall, is six kilometres long and 12 metres high, and was built in 1370 at the start of the Ming Dynasty (明朝 1368-1644). This defensive wall, with its 72 towers, is said to have been built in the shape of a tortoise, and has been given the nickname 'Turtle City'. In Chinese mythology, the tortoise represents longevity and defensive strength. The city wall has six barbican gates with one gate on the south and one gate on the north representing the head and tail of the turtle, and two gates on the east and two gates on the west representing the legs. The city has four main streets, eight roads, and 72 lanes and alleys. Viewed from above, they look like the lines on a tortoise shell.

The second treasure is the tenth-century Buddhist Zhen Guo Temple located about ten

kilometres from Pingyao in Haodongcun (郝洞村). The temple's oldest hall is the Ten Thousand Buddha Hall (万佛殿 Wànfó Diàn), built in 963 during the Northern Song Dynasty (北宋 960-1127) is one of the oldest wooden structures in China. This temple houses 14 beautiful Chinese painted statues, which are among the only examples of tenth-century Buddhist sculptures, including a Buddha statue in the centre of the temple with two followers beside it. Having two main halls and two courtyards, this temple is enclosed by a wall around the entire complex. The temple site itself can be accessed through the Tianwang Hall (天王殿 Tiānwáng Diàn), which acts as the gate of the temple. The next hall is the Ten Thousand Buddha Hall, and the final hall is the Sanfo Hall (三佛殿 Sānfó Diàn).

The third treasure is the large sixth-century Buddhist Shuang Lin Temple approximately seven kilometres outside of Pingyao in the village Qiaotou (桥头村). This temple is famous for its collection of more than 2000 twelfth to nineteenth-century decorated clay statues. This temple is also nicknamed 'the treasury of painted sculpture art', or 'the museum of coloured sculptures'. The systematically displayed sculptures are spread out over ten different halls, which are located within three courtyards. The colourful statues are quite life-like in form and represent the design of artistic traditions of the Jin (晋朝 265-420), Song (宋朝 960-1279) and Yuan (元朝 1271-1368) Dynasties. The themes of the sculpture are mostly of a religious nature or relate to everyday life. The statues are considered some of the best examples of Chinese-coloured sculptures.

When standing on the Pingyao City Wall, you have a clear view of the many temples the city itself holds, e.g. the twelfth-century Confucian Temple (孔庙 Kǒng Miào) with its classic main hall where the main roof timbers are borne by large oblique beams instead of by the more conventional brackets technique; the seventh-century Qing Xu Daoist Temple (清虚观 Qīngxū Guān), which consists of ten main buildings; and the more recent nineteenth-century temples, including the Temple of the Town God (城隍庙 Chéng huáng Miào), the Auspicious Temple (吉祥寺 Jíxiáng Sì) and the Temple to General Guan Yu (关羽庙 Guānyǔ Miào). Another easily spotted monument is the County Administrative







Building, a two-storey wooden city tower that contains artefacts and elements from the 14th to the 19th centuries, which is the tallest structure in this historic city. The many different temples in the city of Pingyao are an excellent representation of Chinese philosophy. The temples were built for various religious and spiritual activities, but this does not limit itself to only one religion. The temples represent



Buddhism, Daoism and Confucianism, and they can exist in harmony with each religion being tolerant to other religions in same area. The key feature of Chinese philosophy is the integration of Confucianism, Taoism and Buddhism, perfectly illustrated by the architecture of Pingyao's temples.

Pingyao, founded in the fourteenth century,

is a beautifully well-preserved example of a traditional Han Chinese city from the Ming and Qing Dynasties. Because many of the ancient inhabitants of Pingyao were successful traders and later also successful bankers, many high-quality private houses were built all around the city. And many of these houses have survived to a large extent. The houses were built according to the feudal and hierarchical Han tradition and have distinguishing local features. Standing on top of the city walls, the visitors can take in great views of the 4000 dark grey houses with their characteristic roofs, narrow alleys and harmonious open courtyards. Approximately 40,000 people live in the old city today; and in addition to the electrical carts, bicycles are the main means of transportation. The city is a typical example of the traditional, romantic idea many Western people have of China, which also made it the perfect backdrop for Zhang Yimou's (张艺谋) famous 1992 movie *Raise the Red Lantern* (《大红灯笼高高挂》 Dàhóng Dēnglong Gāogāo Guà).

Pingyao was not only known for its successful merchants, but also for its famous bankers. During the Qing Dynasty, it was the most important financial centre, or banking centre, in China. China's very first commercial banks were established in Pingyao and the first Chinese cheques, or bank drafts, were issued in Pingyao. At the

height of its success, there were as many as 20 financial institutions in the city, more than half of the total number of banks in the entire country at that time. And up until the late nineteenth-century, China's entire financial world was dominated by the Pingyao banking community. The city has even been called 'Chinese Wall



People are expected to bargain, and the local Pingyao people are very experienced at this haggling, demonstrating that the trading spirit is still very much alive in the city.

Street'. But eventually, after the fall of Qing Dynasty, the banks in Pingyao went bankrupt. Today, even though they are no longer in use, you can still visit some of these historical bank buildings. The biggest and most famous bank, Rishengchang Bank (日升昌票号 Rìshēngchāng Piàohào), has been turned into a museum. As our tour guide informed us, this bank, established in 1823, is considered the first bank in Chinese history. It used to have 35 branches in China and it did business with Europe, America and Southeast Asia.

The city streets of Pingyao used to be dominated by the financial accomplishments of its successful merchants and successful bankers; nowadays it is dominated by the numerous tourists and the countless numbers of souvenir shops, bars and restaurants. Tourists, street carts and stores filled with souvenir merchandise

flank both sides of all the many streets, lanes and alleys. The available souvenirs vary from traditional paper cuttings, old coins, antique furniture, jade jewellery to the local specialties of handmade cloth shoes and lacquer jewellery boxes. And tourists really have to work for their souvenirs as well. People are expected to bargain, and the local Pingyao people are very experienced at this haggling, demonstrating that the trading spirit is still very much alive in the city. And the universal language here was that of trade. Knowledge of the Chinese language is hardly necessary – except for the one phrase 'Tài guì le' (太贵了 too expensive) which we all quickly learned to say – as long as there is a calculator present to type in the price that either the sellers are were asking or the buyer was willing to pay.

Unfortunately, all the tourism attracted by this ancient Chinese city might also be its eventual undoing. On the one hand, being on the UNESCO World Heritage Site List ensures that the city is preserved; on the other hand, it is completely changing its character because of all the tourists it attracts. The presence of the distinct hordes of tourists, and the consequent tourist 'attractions', such as souvenir shops, bars and restaurants, distracts the visitor from the more subtle ancient beauty and the historic treasures of the city. At times, it is hard to determine whether it is a museum or an amusement park. There is a clear clash of ancient China and modern China, the beautiful ancient environment meeting the harsh reality of modern day commercialism.

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## Judge Dee Novels Bring Tang Dynasty to Life

Gineke ten Holt

Judge Dee (狄仁杰 Dī Rénjié) is to the Chinese what Sherlock Holmes is to the Western world: a brilliant detective who catches criminals through the power of deductive reasoning and analysis. Unlike Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's creation, however, Judge Dee was a real historical figure, a magistrate from the Tang Dynasty (唐朝 618-907), from whom the legendary fictional figure has grown. The 2010 award-winning film *Detective Dee and the Mystery of the Phantom Flame* (《狄仁杰之通天帝国》 Dī Rénjié Zhī Tōngtiān Dìguó) illustrates the continuing popularity of the character. In fact, many Dutch readers of detective stories have been familiar with Judge Dee for quite some time.

The reason for this familiarity is Robert Hans van Gulik (高罗佩 Gāo Luópèi, 1910-1967), a Dutch diplomat and sinologist. In the course of his life, Van Gulik not only translated into English an eighteenth-century volume describing cases solved by Judge Dee, called *Celebrated Cases of Judge Dee* (《狄公案》 Dī Gōng Àn);

he went on to write sixteen more original stories in English featuring the great Chinese detective. These novels have been translated into multiple languages.

After their translation into Dutch, the Judge Dee novels gained a respectable Dutch readership and many people became familiar with Tang dynasty legislature, politics and everyday life through these works. For in writing them, Van Gulik did more than just provide interesting mysteries. His novels reflect the individual himself: a learned man, a scholar and lifelong admirer of Chinese culture. Through his protagonist Judge Dee, Van Gulik shows the ideal Confucian statesman: ascetic, selfless, and concerned with the execution of justice regardless of the victims' or perpetrators' standing.

The majority of Van Gulik's novels describe Judge Dee at one of his posts as a district magistrate. The district magistrate was the lowest in the hierarchy of state officials, and served as both police officer and judge for crimes in his district, but

also dealt with all administrative duties including tax-gathering. Van Gulik's novels faithfully describe this situation, so that his protagonist generally has to solve multiple cases at the same time as well as perform other duties.

Furthermore, in his novels Van Gulik often introduces interesting topics from the Tang era, such as Taoism (道教 Dàojiào) in *Necklace and Calabash*, relationships with Korea in *The Chinese Gold Murders*, barbarians at the borders in *The Chinese Maze Murders*, the growing influence of Buddhism (佛教 Fójiào) in *The Chinese Bell Murders*, and secret sects in *The Chinese Lake Murders*. Judge Dee's reactions to these situations show us the attitude of the established order towards such issues.

Through Van Gulik's novels, the reader gets a remarkable insight into ordinary life during the Tang Dynasty: highly civilised, yet very different from modern Western culture. In addition, the stories are engaging, to-the-point and well written. Judge Dee is not the most complex of characters, being the perfect gentleman with only a few minor flaws, but he reflects an ideal that Van Gulik himself must have held in high regard: being a good and honest man.

**Robert van Gulik** was born in Zutphen, the Netherlands, but spent most of his childhood in Dutch East India (now Indonesia). It was here where he first encountered the Chinese language, growing up near the Chinese neighbourhood in Batavia (now Jakarta). This would signal a lifelong interest in China; he studied Oriental languages at the University of Leiden, then went into the diplomatic service. He wrote his first Judge Dee novel during his posting in Japan in 1950, and kept writing until his early death in 1967.

## Treatise on Architectural Methods

Wolfgang Pehlken

China's history of architecture goes back centuries. The professions of architect, structural engineer and craftsmen were not as highly regarded as the Confucian scholar official. So, little written knowledge about these trades remains in existence. Architectural knowledge was mainly passed on orally, usually from father to son. During the Song period (宋朝 960-1279), structural engineering and architecture schools emerged and Chinese architects started to develop modular systems for their buildings.

Increased demand for buildings meant that there was a need to establish some valid principles to build quicker and maintain a high quality. Therefore, Li Jie (李诫) received the order from Emperor Shenzong (神宗 1048-1085) to start compiling *Yingzao fashi* (《营造法式》), the very first treatise on architectural methods. The new manual was completed and presented to the throne in 1100 and finally printed in 1103 under Emperor Huizong (徽宗 1082-1135).

Li's stated goals in compiling this building manual were twofold: to reduce corruption and to introduce standards



in architecture. Until then, no proof of quantity and quality of the building materials existed. The treatise had to be used by both the officials who commissioned buildings and the builders who built them. The manual covers topics ranging from foundations to painted ornaments as well as the estimations of materials and labour. And yet, the main body of the work goes to extreme lengths to outline the regulations on the units of measurement, design standards and construction principles with structural patterns and building elements illustrated in the drawings.

The *Yingzao fashi* can also be regarded as a summary of architectural history dating back to the Tang Dynasty (唐朝 618-907) with its earliest wooden buildings. The main hall of the Nanshan Temple (南山寺) of Wutai

County (五台县), Shanxi (山西省), for instance, was constructed in 782 in full accordance with the prescription that was later laid down in *Yingzao fashi*. The structure of this hall is a central feature in this extensive treatise, occupying two out of the three building categories.

The first category of buildings is Palatial Halls: all large-size buildings with a depth of eight to ten rafters, whereby one rafter is the space between two columns, sometimes also called bays. The wood structure of halls of this category was composed of columns, corbel brackets which support the beam framework in a decorative manner. The inner and outer columns were equally long, giving the Palatial Halls its outstanding structural feature.

The secondary category of building is Halls. The greatest difference to the Palatial Halls lies in the fact that the length of the principal middle columns in the hall increased with the rise of the roof. In other words: the principal columns were made higher than the peripheral columns by one or two purlin-depths. This meant that the roof needed a lot more tiles. The back ends of the extension beams in the hall were also inserted into the principal columns. This type of structure was mainly used for small or medium-sized buildings.

The third and final category is the beam-column structure. Usually adopted







for galleries, domestic houses and shops, no corbel brackets were used. Its roof framework was similar to what was later known as the minor-grade woodwork construction. Columns more generally took up considerable space in the treatise, going into detail on methods to make columns. Given that the timber used to construct these columns took centuries to grow, architects faced a problem with the increased demand for larger buildings: how could they construct columns with limited timber? *Yingzao fashi* offers useful practical advice on a whole host of columns and beams, ranging from so-called jointed columns, encased columns to pieced beams made out of wood. Pieced beams, for instance, were made of two or three, sometimes even more pieces of timber and secured by dovetails at the joints by a mortise and tenon. Encased columns were made from timber of larger size and a number of smaller pieces of wood encasing it all around with fastening iron hoops used outside. As with encased columns, jointed columns were made when a column of an excessive length was required. It was made by first jointing several sections of wood forming a core, and then encasing the core timber with smaller pieces of wood all around. Thus it was good in compression strength but weak in bending resistance and was only used for columns and never for beams. The treatise deliberates, too, on the protection and preservation of such structures, especially from rot and decay. Advice is given to set wooden columns on a stone base so as to protect them against

water and rot. As the columns were not rammed into the earth, they sat freely on a stone base, making them flexible in the event of an earthquake. Another method to prevent rotting was painting, which effectively prevented the wood from cracking and rotting. Not just to prevent rotting, though, painting was used for decorative purposes and divided into two large groups: colourless and coloured paints. Colourless paints are transparent paints, while coloured paints are made up of mineral and chemical pigments. Red, yellow, blue, white, black and green are the six basic colours. Red belongs to the buildings of the throne with yellow tiles on the roof, and set up on a white stone platform. Beneath the eaves, the beams were painted in dark green and blue, often with a gold trim around the dark green. This eleventh-century building manual with its comprehensive guidelines and exquisite hand-drawn illustrations offers today's reader breathtaking insights into the advanced architectural world of ancient China. *Yingzao fashi* proves just how advanced the Chinese were at that time in the construction of then modern buildings. Ten centuries later, at the start of the twenty-first century, China has become fertile ground for leading architects willing to construct some of the world's most ambitious buildings. Any architect today wishing to gain inspiration from the old would do best to consult *Yingzao fashi* for its foresightedness, its attention to detail and its quintessential features that are nothing less than Chinese.



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## A Moon Shines in Every River: On Desire and Change in China

Marieke Havinga

In *A Moon Shines in Every River*, two women meet in China in the nineties. One has lived there all her life and the other started discovering China while teaching English in Wuhan (武汉). Through authentic Chinese sayings and elaborately written passages, the reader too learns about life in China and the changes that took place in this decade and beyond, right up until 2008. How they both adjust to a change of environment, but also learn to live under different circumstances is a theme running through the entire book. The native Chinese writer, Zhang Luwei, tells her story from childhood until marriage, which includes her English teaching at Donghu University (东湖大学 Dōnghú Dàxué) in Wuhan. The reader is informed about everyday life of an independent Chinese woman, someone who is trying to find her way in a rapidly changing China. Zhang expresses her deepest thoughts about being an only child in a family, and how her relationship with her father and mother is altering parallel with the changes in society. Also her relationship with her own daughter and husband is shared with the reader, providing a deep look into the thoughts of a Chinese woman. Zhang Luwei teaches her students to look further “outside the tradition and below the surface”. Through the delivery



### Product Information

Authors	Veerle de Vos and Zhang Luwei
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Publisher	Lannoo
Size	140x210 mm
Pages	432
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Price	€ 24.99

of the Chinese people and their sense of self-esteem”. This is quite an eye-opener for her, as it would probably be for a lot of Westerners, once they learn more about the Chinese culture and their national pride. The title of the book is taken from a Buddhist saying, capturing the story of both of the authors in one succinct sentence. Both women learn that “the moon shines in every river, as long as there is water streaming in it” (千江有水千江月 Qiānjiāng yǒu shuǐ qiānjiāng yuè). Veerle de Vos took the opportunity to see the moon shine in the Yangtze River (长江 Cháng jiāng), something that enriched her life. This Buddhist saying eventually also applied to the life of Zhang, who saw at the end of the book the moon shine in the rivers of the United States, as she is embarking a new life there. Also, Zhang's students appreciated the world that she taught to them: “You taught us a new river will run through your blood as soon as you start to learn another language. You will never be the same again, because your mind opens up and new energy runs through”. Learning another language and learning about another culture will enrich your life and change it forever. The desire to live somewhere else will change your life forever even more. Suitable for both sinologists and anyone

with little or no understanding of the Chinese language and culture, this book makes for an interesting read, especially the way that Chinese sayings are employed throughout the book. These sayings open up new perspectives for those knowing little about China; whilst experts on China will appreciate the manner in which they are embedded in the book, stimulating further food for thought. The reader will become more aware of the face-moving pace of change in Chinese society with Chinese traditional life meeting modern life. Like the saying *Yǒu wénhua bùrú yǒu ge hǎo bàba* (有文化不如有个好爸爸): it is more important to have a good father than knowledge of culture. This is a popular saying amongst the students discussed in the book and it reflects the importance of traditions in the face of modern life. In this particular instance, it is no longer the father who decides upon everything, but it is still highly convenient to have a father with the right sort of connections. European encounters of the Far East, including China, recall the popular phrase ‘East Meets West’. From the front cover of this book with its Belgian and Chinese author through its main body to its conclusion, the reader encounters Chinese society and its ever transformatory nature as well as the interplay between traditionalism and modernity. Reading *A Moon Shines in Every River* does much to show dual east-west perspectives, ranging from the Eastern and Western narrator to the Western appreciation of Eastern systems and processes. It is, in essence, a novel which widens intercultural awareness, but also illustrates how learning another language, living in another country and experiencing another culture can enrich your own life.

**Marieke Havinga**, sinologist and teacher of Chinese language and culture at Hanze University of Applied Sciences, Groningen.

# GCI Calendar

## GCI OVERVIEW

### Groningen Confucius Institute

The Groningen Confucius Institute (GCI, 格罗宁根孔子学院) is a partnership between the Communication University of China (中国传媒大学 Zhōngguó Chuánméi Dàxué) and the Groningen Confucius Institute Foundation, which consists of the Hanze University of Applied Sciences Groningen, the University of Groningen and the city of Groningen. GCI is part of a wide network of Confucius institutes all over the world and is supported by Hanban (汉办) China. Our goal is to strengthen the mutual ties between China and The Netherlands and north-western Germany. By combining our strengths and knowledge at GCI, we offer services in the areas of language (Chinese courses, HSK Tests and English/Dutch-Chinese translations), culture (cultural courses, tailor-made training and cultural events) as well as business (business training, networking activities and consultancy).

## LANGUAGE

### Chinese Courses

GCI offers various levels Chinese courses which will start from 3 January and 14 April 2014. Each unit consists of 12 weeks.

### HSK Tests

GCI will organise five HSK tests (Chinese Proficiency Test) and four HSKK tests (Chinese Proficiency Oral Test) in 2014:

Exam	Date	Deadline registration
HSK (K)	16 March	17 February
HSK (K)	10 May	13 April
HSK	14 June	18 May
HSK (K)	11 October	14 September
HSK (K)	6 December	9 November

## BUSINESS

GCI offers courses on doing business in China and business consultancy services and introduces regional companies to the Chinese market, and vice versa. In 2014, GCI will focus on the following points:

- Establishing a network of companies and institutions interested in doing business with China. GCI thereby acts as a gateway between companies, institutions and government organisations, both in China and the Northern region.
- Acting as a China consultancy desk for individual parties. This is tailor-made support on demand, including consulting on market orientation, market research, business development and commercial communication. Furthermore, GCI supports companies in a pragmatic way in their efforts to establish commercial relationships with (potential) partners in China.
- Establishing a China Business Competence Centre. In this Centre, GCI gathers China expertise available in the Netherlands. Business trends and developments in the mutual economic traffic are captured and made accessible to the business community. The China Competence Centre aims to inspire companies to establish new business initiatives.

### China Dichtbij: View on Doing Business with China

**Speaker:** Dr. Victor Yuan

**Facilitator:** Ning Ding

**Date:** 18 February 2014, 5.00 p.m.

**Location:** Oude Boteringestraat 19, Hanze sociëteit, Groningen

The theme will be innovative business plans. An expert in this subject matter from China, Victor Yuan, CEO of Horizon Research Consultancy Group will strengthen the audience's skills in this area. The first part of the meeting will be used to deliver a presentation on innovative business plans. Consumer profiling will be an essential part as well. In the second part, we will brainstorm the concrete

questions from the participants. The event will round off with an opportunity to network with other like-minded individuals. We have invited our relations from Oldenburg and Bremen as well.

### Business Communication in Relation to the Chinese Market

**Date:** 10 April 2014, 5.00 p.m.

**Location:** Oude Boteringestraat 19, Hanze sociëteit Groningen

**Facilitator:** Trienke Drijfhout (Senior Lecturer Consultancy in Communication)

Guest lecture about marketing communication in Chinese context. What are the dos and don'ts regarding communication with the Chinese consumer? How are major brands approaching the emerging Chinese consumer? And what competences does an entrepreneur need to have in order to be effective in the Chinese business world? Competences that have to do with negotiation; closing commercial deals; effective cooperation in Chinese context.

### Theme event: Launch of China Competence Centre

**Date:** 15 May 2014, 12.00 p.m. – 6.00 p.m.

**Facilitators:** Trienke Drijfhout, Xuefei Cao, Jan Klerken

GCI aims to stimulate business between China and the Netherlands. Although many initiatives are being taken currently to support mutual bilateral relations, there is a specific need for companies to get guidance in finding the right partners in China and vice versa in the Northern region. The core function of GCI is the liaison function, which means that GCI facilitates parties involved in getting the right connections. In order to strengthen this function which has been in existence over the past three years, the aim will be to concentrate the knowledge off all GCI partners in a China Competence Centre. On 15 May 2014, we will present the initial outline of the China Competence Centre to the Netherlands. The basic idea is that on a scientific basis business trends and developments in the mutual economic traffic are captured and become easily accessible. Furthermore, the China Competence Centre aims to inspire and support companies in establishing new business initiatives; and finally, to offer expertise on entering the Chinese market. Besides introducing the concept, it is our purpose to get feedback from less or more experienced participants as well.

## CULTURE

We provide various cultural courses, tailor-made training programmes and cultural consultancy to companies as well as other organisations and organise workshops on certain themes and a series of cultural events.

## CULTURAL EVENTS

### JUNE TO DECEMBER 2013

### The Conference of Chinese Language Teachers in the Netherlands

On **June, 29**, 2013 the Groningen Confucius Institute held *The Conference of Chinese language teachers in the Netherlands* in Utrecht. Near 60 Chinese language teachers from the Netherlands and Belgium attended the conference. Mr. Fang Qingchao, Education counselor from the Embassy of the People's Republic of China in the Netherlands addressed the conference. Professor Joël Bellassen, a renowned French sinologist, Inspector General of Chinese Language Teaching for the Ministry of Education in France, gave a keynote speech entitled *The uniqueness of Chinese Teaching and Innovative Teaching Approach*. Ms. Yolande Ulenaers, Chair of the Dutch Network of Chinese Language and Culture, principal of Kandinsky College in Nijmegen, gave a speech entitled *Education without borders --Chances for Chinese language and culture in Dutch education*. Chinese Language teacher Ms. Caijing from the Erasmus University shared her teaching experience.







**East Meets West: Official Launch of *Global China Insights* in Germany**

On **2 July**, sixteen years ago, Great Britain handed Hong Kong (香港) back to China (中国) after 99 years of colonial rule. This anniversary presented itself as the ideal opportunity to celebrate this English-speaking part of mainland China, but also to launch the first edition of *Global China Insights* (《全球中国洞察》 Quángqiú Zhōngguó Dòngchá) in Germany. Held in Groningen's German partner city, Oldenburg, the German launch of GCI took place in an institution devoted to the delivery of English as a Foreign Language: the Academy of English.

To celebrate the launch of the first edition of the English language magazine about China, the Academy of English decided to set aside a room to promote understanding and awareness of China as well as convey the growing importance of the English language market in the country. In the presence of members of the Oldenburg City Council, the Groningen Confucius Institute and Oldenburg's German-Chinese Friendship Society, the China Room at the Academy of English was officially inaugurated by the Editor-in-Chief of GCI, Jingyi Liu (刘婧一). Speaking in Chinese, Ms. Liu praised the efforts of the editorial team and the Academy of English for promoting Chinese culture among its students.



**Summer Camp**

From **6-20 July 2013**, GCI organised the first Summer Camp to China sponsored by Hanban (the Headquarters of Confucius Institutes) and the Communication University of China. The Summer Camp combined an intensive language training with a cultural enrichment programme. Joining the Summer Camp were 17 students, all of whom had an exciting and fruitful trip. The participants experienced the Chinese language both inside and outside the classroom. For the first time, they had the chance to learn the remote art of paper cutting, calligraphy, Chinese knotting in class, and even quickly learned to sing popular Chinese songs. Visits to Beijing attractions and the Shanxi Province gave them more knowledge and a chance to reflect on the huge country and its culture. The following passages are impressions of a series of aspects of China, shared by a few of the Summer Camp participants providing a brief glance into this wonderful trip.

**Summer Camp Impression Ingrid Fischer**

What would it be like to learn an entirely new language at 35 years old? As a linguist, I am very interested in how people acquire a foreign language, and I wanted to find out for myself what it would be like. I decided to learn Chinese, an interesting language very far removed from any other language I have ever studied with a beautiful writing system that is also very different from anything I am used to. I joined a Chinese course at the Groningen Confucius Institute (GCI) in 2012. In 2013, GCI together with Hanban (汉办)



and the Communication University of China (中国传媒大学) decided to organise a two-week Summer Camp in Beijing (北京). A good excuse for me to travel to China for the first time!

Each day after class, we were free to discover Beijing. We explored the city, and tried out all kinds of Chinese food. From breakfast, to lunch, to dinner, eating was always an exciting adventure because of all the wonderful unfamiliar dishes. But also, ordering the food and drinks always proved quite a challenge. Despite our best efforts to put our newly learned Chinese phrases into practice, most of the time the Chinese could not understand us because of our thick Dutch accents. This forced us to step up our game in learning Chinese (and inspired us to find Chinese friends whose English was good enough to help us).

**Beijing – An Impression Maartje Schreijenbergh**

With over 20 million people living in Beijing (北京), it is nothing less than a busy metropolis where life goes on day and night. That is also what I found one of the most charming things about Beijing. Whether it was daylight or not, I saw people busy, preparing and selling delicious food; bargaining in the shops for the best prices; or texting one another with their mobile phones. At night, I thought the streets were at their most beautiful: the lanterns in all colours and neon lights made me feel like I was in one big fantasy land. The city itself is a reflection of its long history, its modern present and yet-to-come future. When I visited the Forbidden City (故宫 Gùgōng), I felt like an emperor from ancient times. But when I



walked down Wangfujing (王府井) Shopping Street, I almost forgot that Beijing has a history of a few thousand years.

My favourite parts of the city were the old hutongs (胡同). I could wander in these little streets with tiny homes and cute shops forever. Since we only had two weeks, I still have not seen all that much of them.

**CUC Impression Karst Bron**

Arriving at the subway stop of the Communication University of China (CUC), the first building that can be seen is the academic building. Seeing this, our group knew that CUC was a city of its own within Beijing (北京). This was quite a surprise to me. During my stay, I talked with a lot of students who were already living there. It was really surprising to me that the students were open-minded and liked to hang out with foreigners. In the first week, we had our first opportunity to talk to CUC students and the impression I got of CUC students was really good. They seemed truly interested in our country and culture, and it was vice versa. In the following week, there were several other moments to meet more Chinese students. Every time we met up with the Chinese students, they brought some other friends with them, which was really cool because it provided us with an extra opportunity to practice our Chinese as this was also a nice occasion to talk about the differences between our cultures, although most of the conversing was in English. A lot of the stereotypes about the typical Chinese turned out to be untrue. Furthermore, our new Chinese friends really liked to talk in English.







### Beijing 798 Art Zone Gijs Kreeft

Before the Summer Camp in Beijing (北京) I had already visited several exhibitions dedicated to Chinese contemporary art at the Groninger Museum. As a result, I was full with anticipation on the day our group visited the 798 Art Zone in Beijing. The Beijing 798 Art Zone is the birth place for many Chinese artists who from there earned their fame. The 798 Art Zone is named after the factory in which the first artists in the area started their workshop after it was threatened with closure. It was a delight to spend the afternoon walking through the German Bauhaus-designed factories now housing famous artists like Wang Xingwei (王兴伟), from whom I bought an art book. As I walked through the Art Zone I noticed that Mao Zedong (毛泽东) and the fast economic development in China are two popular themes among artists. In the centre of the Art Zone, a sculpture stands combining both of these themes. It is a plastic sculpture of three dragons wearing a Zhongshan suit (中山装 zhōngshānzhuāng), just as Chairman Mao (毛主席 Máo zhǔxí) did. For me, this image reflects the feeling you get from walking around in Beijing. Respecting its past, the city looks forward to the future.

### The Shanxi or Jin Merchant Culture Lisbeth Hall and Wieger van der Slikke

Historically, the province of Shanxi (山西) was famous for its business culture, the Jin Merchant Culture (晋商文化 Jìnshāng wénhuà). The name is derived from the old name of Shanxi, 'Jin', referring to the state 'Jin' during the Zhou Dynasty (周朝 1046 BC-256 BC). We were privileged to hear about this culture during a lecture given by Professor Bai Wengang (白文刚), a native of this province. Moreover, we experienced it first hand during a trip to the ancient walled city of Pingyao (平遥) and the Wang Family Compound (王家大院 Wángjiā Dàyuàn).

Shanxi became the focal point of trade during the Ming (明朝 1368-1644) and Qing (清朝 1644-1911) Dynasties, when Shanxi



Merchants were the largest and wealthiest business group in China. Even Chinese rulers had to borrow money from them and the term 'Shanxi Merchant' became synonymous with wealth. This wealth allowed Shanxi families to live in large houses, almost villages in themselves, such as the Wang Family Compound. We learned that Shanxi Merchants were honest, disciplined, tenacious and courageous – qualities which must have contributed to the rise of Jin Merchant Culture. They were also innovative as illustrated by the advent of the draft banking system in Pingyao. Another reason for their rise was the political persecution suffered by the Shanxi people. This made them change their focus from politics to business. Furthermore, Shanxi had a large population but little arable land so people had to find means of generating an income other than agriculture. Another opportunity exploited by the Jin merchants was that of supplying the cities near the Great Wall (长城 Chángchéng) with food, especially the important commodity of salt. However, they also travelled much further afield to cities, such as Moscow and London. These trips were characterised by hardship and danger, with many dying along the way. Lamentably, Jin Merchant Culture is now history. Professor Bai Wengang explained that the province, once so famous for its business culture, is now sadly known as 'Coal Boss' (煤老板 Méi lǎobǎn). This transformation of his native province clearly did not please him and he urged his compatriots to feel proud of their rich cultural heritage. After our trip to Shanxi, where we admired what remains of this fascinating culture while breathing in the coal dust, we couldn't agree more!



### Noorderzon: Festival for Performing Arts

On 25 August 2013, we had a one-day promotion of our language courses and cultural activities at the Noorderzon Festival. With a great number of visitors on the last day of the festival, GCI was exposed to a wide audience. A number of children showed interest in learning Chinese and the flyers on our courses and upcoming events were distributed to people for the autumn courses.

### Taiji Roliball Workshop

On 18 July 2013, GCI organised a workshop on Taiji Roliball (太极拳力球) with the inventor Professor Bai Rong (白榕), also attended by a delegation from China. The deputy mayor of Groningen, Mr. Dig Itha, joined the workshop and gave a welcoming speech to the delegation. The Director of Sports Bureau in Jinzhong City Jiangxi Province Mr. Xing Junjie (邢俊杰) and Professor Bai Rong respectively gave presentations on Taiji Roliball. During the workshop, people showed great interest in the sport and after an introductory video. Local instructor Jonn van Schoot and Professor Bai Rong gave demonstrations and encouraged the participants to have a go.

### Chinese Language Day

On Saturday 28 September 2013, GCI organised the first Chinese Language Day at the Waagplein in Groningen. The event, opened by the mayor of Groningen Dr. Rehwinkel, started with a drum and gong performance by the students from the Groningen Bao



Trieu martial arts school (保潮体育中心). The rousing beats and the wonderful performance drew in large crowds to the event. The Chinese culture feast lasted for four hours and involved demonstrations of Chinese fan dancing by children, martial arts and Tai Chi performances by the students from Bao Trieu as well as a Roliball (柔力球) performance by the learners from Groningen Taiji Bailong Ball School. The Dutch band *OrientTales* was invited to play Chinese folk music on Western music instruments. Chinese calligrapher Mr. Li Junming (李俊明) from the Communication



University of China (中国传媒大学) gave a live calligraphy demonstration. In addition to the performances, local Dutch people were invited to try their hand at Chinese traditional arts. Throughout the day, there were also interesting Chinese language and culture games for children and adults. The day was concluded with a traditional Lion dance (舞狮 wǔshī) performed by Bao Trieu students. It was a special and colourful event that not only lead to more people learning about GCI, but it also gave people the opportunity to experience the charming Chinese language and rich Chinese culture.







**China Dichtbij**

On Thursday **10 October 2013**, the networking event of the Groningen Confucius Institute China Dichtbij was held at the Van Swinderen Huys in Groningen. China Dichtbij (translation: Close to China) is designed for people who are interested in China and would like to explore opportunities for studying and/or working in China. It also aims to develop cooperation with Chinese companies and to be a place to meet people, to share knowledge and a common interest in Chinese language, culture and business activities. This event was opened by Dr. Liu Jingyi (刘婧一), Chinese Director of the Groningen Confucius Institute. First, she introduced two ways to get closer to China: coming to China (e.g. attend the GCI Summer Camp) or bringing China to the Netherlands. We invited the leader of the 2013 GCI Summer Camp, who is also a Chinese teacher at GCI, Ms Zhang Di (张笛), and one of the Summer Camp participants, Kim Chee Leong, to give a short presentation. Then, Dr. Liu introduced a second way of becoming closer to China: experiencing Chinese calligraphy. This was demonstrated in the form of a Calligraphy Show by Professor Li Junming (李俊明) from the Communication University of China, who has a mission to bring Chinese culture to the Netherlands. Not only did he demonstrate calligraphy art in person by painting some beautiful Chinese characters, but he also introduced calligraphy of the twelve Chinese Zodiacs (十二生肖 Shí'èr Shēngxiāo), which was complemented by a very interesting Zodiac story. This networking event enabled participants to get closer to China, and enhanced their interests and knowledge of China from various perspectives.

**Confucius Classroom**

On **Monday 11 November 2013**, State Secretary for Education, Culture and Science in the Netherlands, Sander Dekker, announced that Chinese is going to be an official VWO (University Preparatory Education) final exam course in Dutch secondary schools. In 2010, nine Dutch secondary schools started a Chinese language course pilot. In light of China's growing economy and China becoming a super power, which could mean possible future business opportunities for Chinese speaking Westerners, the Dutch government provided a one million euro subsidy to find out if Chinese language and culture could be a suitable final exam course. Today, the pilot has proven so successful, both teachers and students are very enthusiastic, that the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science has now decided to recognise Chinese as a full-fledged final exam course. This means that in future VWO students can choose Chinese as their compulsory second foreign language (in addition to English) instead of German or French. This only applies to secondary schools that currently actually offer Chinese as a course, which at the moment is thirty schools.

In order to be more supportive in developing Chinese teaching and learning in local secondary schools, Groningen Confucius Institute is actively exploring cooperation with outstanding secondary schools to establish Confucius Classrooms. The Confucius Classroom is a non-profit institution with the purpose of enhancing understanding and friendship between the young people of China and the Netherlands by sponsoring the teaching and learning of Chinese language and culture. In September 2013, the first three Confucius Classrooms in the Netherlands were approved by the Headquarters of Confucius Institutes, they are Confucius Classrooms at Kandinsky College in Nijmegen, Christian Comprehensive Vincent van Gogh in Assen and Theresialyceum in Tilburg.



**Kandinsky College**

Kandinsky College is a secondary school with 1500 students and enjoys an international profile. The school has an outstanding bilingual department and a growing number of students enrolling in the school's internationalisation programmes, such as TTO (bilingual education), ELOS (Education Stretching Borders) and Chinese language and culture. In February 2013, the school was awarded the top honour of 'Excellent School' by the Dutch Department of Education. Kandinsky College is located in Nijmegen, the oldest city in the Netherlands.

**Principal: Yolande Ulenaers**

Yolande Ulenaers is a dedicated advocate for internationalisation in Dutch education. She is principal of Kandinsky College and Chair of the Dutch Network of Chinese Language and Culture, a network for schools seeking to enhance the position and the quality of teaching Chinese language and culture in the Netherlands. After graduating from the Leuven University in 1986, Yolande Ulenaers spent two years in the Far East teaching Modern Western Languages at the Feng Chia University (逢甲大学) in Taiwan (台湾). At that time, she became familiar with Chinese language and culture herself.

**CS Vincent van Gogh**

CS Vincent van Gogh is the Assen Christian Comprehensive School for mixed ability pupils of secondary school age. It offers educational programmes ranging from grammar school and bilingual education to special needs education. Currently, the school has 2001 pupils, 1320 of whom are in the secondary and grammar school section of the Lariks building. A brand new building is currently under construction with state-of-the-art equipment (computer facilities, science floor) to help pupils reach their full potential. A languages focus and exchange programme give pupils a genuinely international outlook. These programmes are strongly



related to the school's goals and mission to orientate children towards a wider world. The introduction to Chinese language and culture lends itself as the next logical step.

**Headmaster: Bert Oosting**

Starting out as a teacher of English in 1987, Mr. Oosting worked his way up to become headmaster of the intermediate and upper levels of the Assen Christian Comprehensive Vincent van Gogh in 2003. His personal drive is to inspire teachers, pupils and staff members with new ideas and thoughts to reach a high level of performance and job satisfaction. In addition, he is keen to create working conditions in which teachers can thrive and experience independence and trust, within the bounds set by the staff themselves, to work on their personal development, student achievement and school improvement.

**Theresialyceum**

The Theresialyceum prepares students for higher professional education and academic education at universities. Founded in 1926 as a Girls' School by the Sisters of Charity, it became a mixed comprehensive in 1969. Although there is no formal link with the congregation, the rich tradition still informs the culture of the school. Examples include the interest in art and culture, the value(s)-orientation as well as the care and guidance. The Theresialyceum is one of the top-level schools in the country with very good results. The lyceum is an officially acknowledged Higher Gifted Profile School. The school offers a broad educational programme with optimum opportunities for the 1400 students to develop their talents.

**Headmaster: Tomas Oudejans**

The Headmaster of the Theresialyceum is Mr. Tomas Oudejans (LLM). He started his career as a teacher in physics and mathematics. After graduating with a Law degree, he became Assistant Professor at the Tilburg University, specialising in intellectual property. After five years, he became a staff member and managed the Department of Education, the ICT office and the International Office of the Faculty of Law. In 2009, he became Headmaster of the Theresialyceum. His personal motto is that only a good atmosphere can lead to excellent results.



### Vaktreffen Internationaal: Cooperation with China

On **1 November 2013**, the Groningen Confucius Institute participated in the annual meeting Vaktreffen Internationaal (translation: International Cooperation Meeting), organised by the City of Groningen. During this event, the City of Groningen met its German sister cities Oldenburg and Bremen. The purpose of the meeting was to promote cooperation between governments, organisations and research institutes on several topics. Dr. Jingyi Liu, Director of GCI, hosted a session on the topic 'Cooperation with China'. The outcome of this session was promising: the integration of political, business and academic strengths will create more synergy in the cooperation with China. Also, regional cooperation is important; therefore, Groningen, Bremen and Oldenburg agreed on sharing information on upcoming events to seek more opportunities for working together.

### Chinese Evening

GCI's monthly event 'Chinese Evening' which takes place **every third Friday of the month** at Café Atlantis in Groningen has gained in popularity since its debut on 19 April 2013. Among its participants, the Chinese Evening has become known for its educational and entertainment value, bringing local and Chinese people together. The theme on the evening of 16 August was Chinese jokes. Hosts Gineke ten Holt and Teng Jiaqi told several humorous Chinese jokes that played with certain aspects of Chinese language and culture. The participants were stimulated to practice and improve their Chinese language skills in this relaxed atmosphere. The topic on the evening of 20 September was international brands and their Chinese translations. Gineke ten Holt and Teng Jiaqi (滕嘉琪) showed some examples of good translations of international brand names as well as some bad ones, which could lead to big differences in marketing results. The Chinese translations of these international brands provided some insight into Chinese business culture. The participants learned about many international brand names in Chinese as well as the unique Chinese culture these translations represent. On the evening of 18 October, we invited calligrapher



Mr. Li Junming (李俊明) from the Communication University of China (中国传媒大学) and we talked about Chinese calligraphy (中国书法). Mr. Li not only showed everyone how to write Chinese calligraphy, but he also interacted with the participants. Everyone experienced the charm of Chinese calligraphy and chatted away with each other in Chinese.

### Film Club

Since the debut of the Chinese film club on 5 April 2013, GCI has been held this regular culture event on every first Friday of the month. Excellent films from different time periods were selected with varying themes that show the rich and colourful culture of the Chinese people. On **4 August**, we showed the martial arts film Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon (《卧虎藏龙》 Wòhǔ Cánglóng). This film not only has beautiful, oriental martial art scenes, but also places the interpretation of traditional Chinese aesthetics and emotions in a new perspective. The host, Ms. Teng Jiaqi (滕嘉琪), gave a short introduction and explained the deeper meaning of the film's title. After watching the film, everyone expressed their opinions about it and discussed the Chinese culture in it. We showed a touching modern film, The Road Home (《我的父亲母亲》 Wǒde Fùqīn Mǔqīn), on **6 September**. It is a romantic love story about a Chinese couple, and it is narrated by the couple's son. It demonstrates the purity of love set in the context of Chinese countryside society in the 1960s. As usual, host Teng Jiaqi led an audience discussion about the film, also discussing Chinese marriage and the differences between East and West. On **4 October** we showed the film Hua Mulan (《花木兰》 Huā Mùlán), which tells the encouraging story of ancient Chinese heroine Hua Mulan. She secretly took the place of her father, who was in bad health, and joined the army for twelve years where she gained high merits. The film was a good representation of the loyalty and the sense of filial duty of ancient Chinese women. Some of the viewers were deeply moved by the legendary heroine. Teng Jiaqi introduced the famous poem Ballad of Mulan (《木兰辞》 Mùlán Cí) on which this film was based and lead the discussion about the characters in this film.



## UPCOMING EVENTS

### China and Chinese in Secondary Education

*Inspiration, Information, Interaction*

The Groningen Confucius Institute will jointly organise the National Congress: 'Chinese Language and Culture in Secondary Education' on **28 January 2014** in Leiden. The purpose of the Congress is to inform and inspire the participants about introducing China and Chinese in secondary education. All parties involved (see the logos below) will join forces to develop a varied program – from didactics to internationalisation. All aspects regarding Chinese and Chinese culture and society as school subjects will be addressed during the plenary sessions and interactive workshops. 150 to 250 participants can participate in the Congress.



in samenwerking met



Landelijk netwerk voor  
Chinese taal en cultuur



### Chinese Evening

**Dates:** Every third Friday of the month

**Location:** Café Atlantis, Gedempte Zuiderdiep 61, Groningen, The Netherlands

**Time:** 8.00 p.m. – 10.30 p.m.

Chinese Evening is a monthly event which takes place every third Friday of the month. At this event, we aim to bring people together who are interested in practicing their Chinese language skills as well as wanting a taste of Chinese culture in the comfortable and quiet environment of Café Atlantis.

#### Topics in 2014:

- 17 January ■ Chinese Spring Festival
- 21 February ■ Chinese Celebrities
- 21 March ■ Chinese Folk Tales
- 18 April ■ Regional Peculiarities
- 16 May ■ Chinese Youth
- 20 June ■ Chinese Opera

### Chinese Film Club

**Dates:** Every first Friday of the month

**Location:** Groningen Confucius Institute, Oude Boteringestraat 42, Groningen, The Netherlands

**Time:** 5.30 p.m. – 7.30 p.m. Film Club is a monthly event which takes place every first Friday of the month. At each Film Club, different Chinese movies are shown, providing insights into Chinese social life and culture. Every Film Club starts with a short introduction to the movie and ends with a discussion.



**Date:** 7 February 2014

**Heart of China (《黄河绝恋》 Huánghé Juéliàn)**

The film tells the story of a grounded American pilot during the Second World War who learns about the noble spirit of the Chinese people when he is rescued by the communist-led Chinese army after an emergency landing near the Great Wall. On the

way to the Communist base, the pilot falls in love with a girl soldier whose lingering memory of being raped by the Japanese makes her a determined fighter. Half a century later, the American pilot returns to the Yellow River (黄河 Huánghé) to pay his respects to the native people who rescued him.



**Date:** 7 March 2014

**Spicy Love Soup (《爱情麻辣烫》 Àiqíng Málàtàng)**

Spicy Love Soup starts with a young couple eating hot pot from a two-sided bowl shaped in a Yin and Yang pattern. Until the couple's wedding at the end of the film, *Spicy Love Soup* intermittently shows six different episodes about different generations' relationships. Love can be sweet, sour, or spicy. And, you will taste all those emotions from this contemporary Chinese film *Spicy Love Soup*.



**Date:** 4 April 2014  
**Not one less (《一个都不能少》 Yíge Dōu Bùnéng Shǎo)**  
Set in China during the 1990s, the film centers on a 13-year-old supply teacher, Wei Minzhi (魏敏芝), in the Chinese countryside. Called in to substitute for a village teacher for one month, Wei is told not to lose any students. When one of the boys takes off in search of work in the big city, she goes to look for him. The film addresses education reform in China, the economic gap between urban



and rural populations, and the prevalence of bureaucracy and authority figures in life.

**Date:** 2 May 2014  
**Ip man (《叶问》 Yè Wèn )**  
*Ip Man* is set in the 1930s in Foshan (佛山), a hub of Southern Chinese martial arts, where various schools actively recruit disciples and compete against each other. Although the Wing Chun (咏春) master Ip Man is the most skilled martial artist in Foshan, he is unassuming and keeps a low profile. His peaceful life is changed since the outbreak of the Sino-Japanese War.

**Date:** 6 June 2014  
**Ip man 2 (《叶问 2》 Yè Wèn 2)**  
Continuing from where the first film ended, Wing Chun master Ip Man and his family move to Hong Kong (香港) in the early 1950s after their escape from Foshan. There, Ip desires to open a school to propagate his art, as well as make a living during the difficult times, but he has difficulty attracting students due to his lack of reputation in the city.

**Summer Camp**  
**Date:** 11-25 July 2014  
**Location:** Beijing (北京), China  
After a very successful first Summer Camp, GCI is organising its second Summer Camp in cooperation with the Communication University of China (CUC). Students of GCI are invited to join this Summer Camp to learn Chinese and experience Chinese culture in China, enabling them to experience the realities of China.



**Chinese Advertising Exhibition and the Opening Forum**  
**Date:** 15 September to 15 November 2014  
Groningen Confucius Institute, in collaboration with China Advertising Museum (中国广告博物馆 Zhōngguó Guǎnggào Bówùguǎn) and Communication University of China, sponsored by Hanban, is planning an advertising exhibition and an opening forum in Groningen in 2014 focused on marketing strategies. The aim of the event is to reveal the transformation of China's consumer culture and social culture through the display and exhibition of Chinese advertising from the 1970s to the current day. Nearly 600 print, film and broadcast ads and 100 substantial products are expected to be exposed to the audience and the exhibition will demonstrate to the audience the development and change of Chinese people's lives over the past 35 years from five different aspects: clothing, food, living, travel and daily use. From a marketing perspective, the exhibition provides information and context for European entrepreneurs and researchers about Chinese consumers' behaviour and the cultural trace, also the development of international brands and Chinese brands in China in the last 35 years. Researchers also have the chance to find out about policy changes and their impact on Chinese people's lives and how these changes influenced various industries. The opening forum is designed to be a high-quality conference with international-wide attendees and brilliant keynote speakers from all over the world, including top professors and entrepreneurs and governmental officials.

GCI PEOPLE DYNAMICS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

In submitting his resignation as Mayor of Groningen to take up a position overseas, **Dr. Peter Rehwinkel** also relinquishes his position as Chairman of the Board of the Groningen Confucius Institute, effective from 1 November 2013. His position will be taken over by the Interim Mayor before a new mayor is appointed. GCI is grateful for Dr. Rehwinkel's contribution in setting up the institute. As a 'man of the people', he was always closely connected to those who executed the language and culture programmes at GCI. He connected the Groningen City of Talent partnership with the mission of GCI: to internationally liaise between China and the Netherlands. We would like to wish Dr. Rehwinkel all the best in his new international position.



NEWCOMERS



**Jan Klerken, MSc**, Vice Director of Groningen Confucius Institute. In his role, he focuses on business development between China and the Northern region of the Netherlands. Holding a Master's degree in Human Resources Management from the University of Tilburg, he has been working in the area of Human Resources since 1993, making his career specifically in the international food business. Combining numerous roles, he has been acting as a Human Resources Consultant at the Hanze University of Applied Sciences since December 2010 and is also an independent HR counselor. His main drive is to inspire people and organisations to be top performers. From that point of view, he assists companies and institutions doing business with China in developing and expanding their intercultural competencies.

**Xiao Yingying (肖盈盈)**, Chinese teacher at Guizhou Commercial College (贵州商业高等专科学校 Guìzhōu Shāngyè Gāoděng Zhuānkē Xuéxiào). She attended Guizhou Normal University (贵州师范大学 Guìzhōu Shīfàn Dàxué) and obtained her MA in Modern and Contemporary Chinese Literature in 2009. Since then, she has taught courses in Chinese traditional culture, including Confucian (儒家 Rújiā) and Taoist (道家 Dàojiā) Classics. Employing her highly professional skills to spread and share Chinese traditional culture, her teaching is well respected among her students. Prior to teaching, she worked as a Restaurant Manager at Yum! Restaurants Co., Ltd. (百盛餐饮集团 Bǎishèng Cānyīn Jítuǎn) in Chengdu (成都) and KFC in Guiyang (贵阳) from 2001 to 2004. She will commence her Chinese teaching responsibilities at GCI in January 2014.



**Ding Xiyuan (丁喜媛)**, graduate student at the Communication University of China (中国传媒大学), studying Linguistics and Applied Linguistics from 2011 to 2014. She received her Bachelor's degree in English at the Communication University of China in July 2011. She was a volunteer Chinese teacher, teaching Chinese language and Chinese calligraphy to Thai students majoring in Traditional Chinese Medical Science and coaching them in HSK 5 level, at the Nakhon Ratchasima College, Thailand from May 2012 to March 2013. She will start her work as a volunteer Chinese teacher for GCI in January 2014.



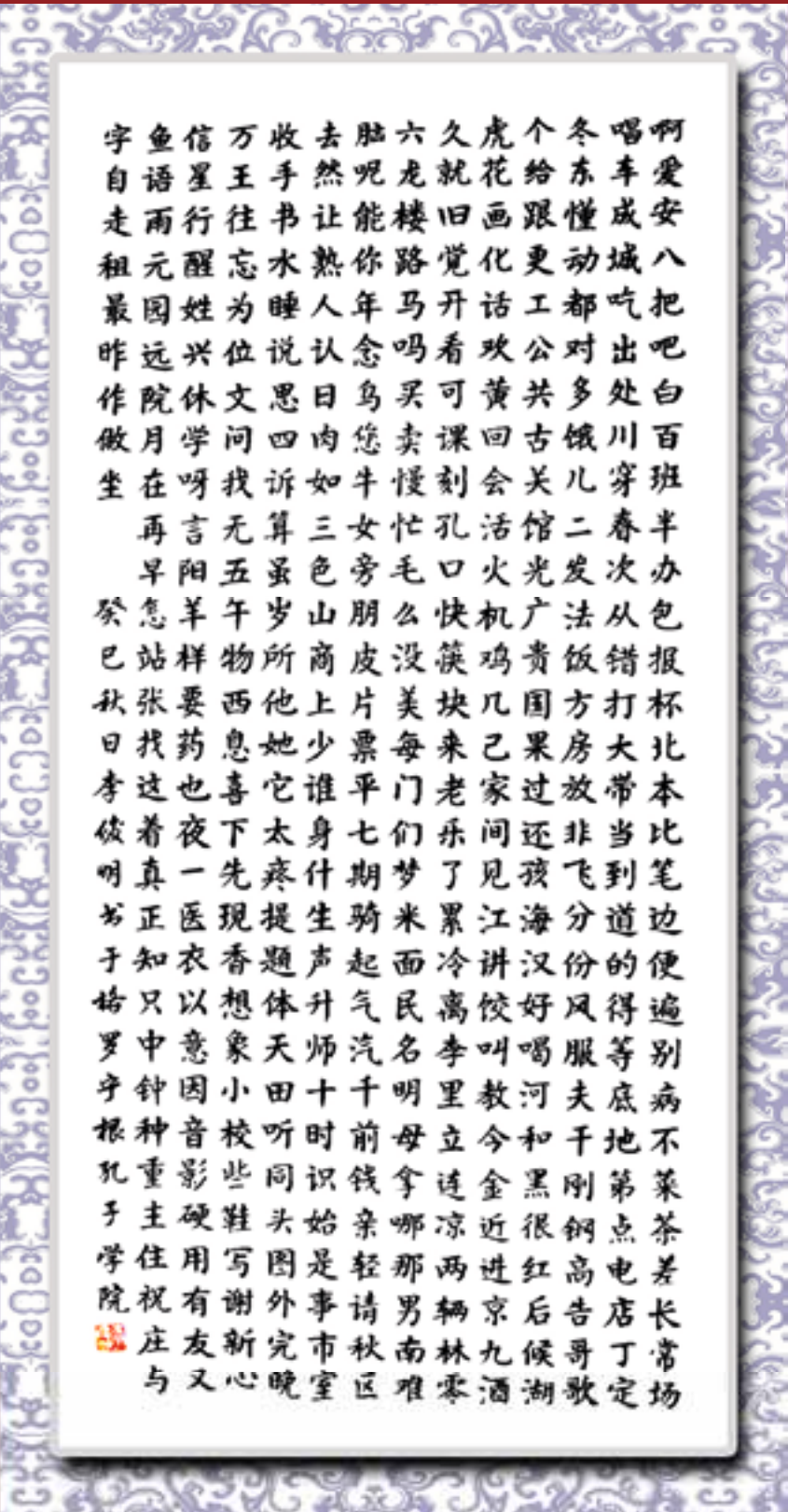




First row from left to right: Ingrid Fischer, John Goodyear, Liu Jingyi (刘婧一), Xuefei Knoester-Cao (曹雪飞), Jan Klerken  
Second row from left to right: Teng Jiaqi (滕嘉琪), Hao Cui (郝翠), Jasna Ros, Zhang Di (张笛), Li Yunxuan (李韵璇)

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Joël Bellassen  
400-Character Threshold

Calligraphy from Li Junming (李俊明)  
Design by Tran Huu Nhut



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